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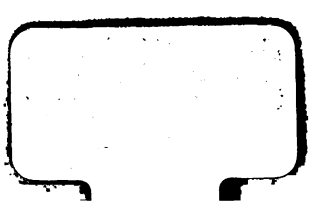

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THE CHANGELING.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF "CANVASSING,"

IN THE "O'HARA" TALES.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON
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1360.

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PREFACE.

IN justice to ourselves, we desire to prefix to the following pages, a few words of explanation.

An Irish novel of the year '47 we feel to be something strange and revolting. A novel from this famine and pestilence-stricken land! With "lamentation, mourning, and woe, written within and without"—written, as in the prophetic scroll, on her history of this year—could any one of her children have been so hard of heart, or so light of head, as to sit

down to write upon any subject not immediately connected with her present distress? Oh, no! not thus could we have done, in this terrible '47—this time of Ireland's "trouble"—sore and grievous trouble—when her wretchedness has become so intensely wretched, that she has ceased to lament over her dead. "The desire of her eyes is taken from her, but she does not mourn, nor weep, neither do her tears run down." The "howl" with which she is taunted, is no longer borne upwards, even to her own skies—how, then, can it be wafted across the water, to annoy Honourable Gentlemen. We think it due to ourselves to explain how this work comes to be published. It was begun some years ago, suspended occasionally, then at long intervals resumed, and finally concluded (as often hap-

pens in such cases), in haste, more than two years since. We publish it now, though not perhaps judging this to be altogether the most appropriate time for a work of the kind. We feel, however, that to postpone, in this case, would be virtually to relinquish our intention altogether, and for the following reason:—Change is busy around us. Great changes have already occurred, and greater changes are in perspective, looming in the distance. What would have been a true picture of society, a few years since, would not be a true one a few years hence.

We desire to present, before the impression may have faded from the minds of those who knew them (if not personally, at least by report), certain picturesque characters which

belong to a former generation. Just as it is moving off, but before it has quite vanished from the scene, we have thought it well to catch the passing expression, and stamp a resemblance which might strike those acquainted with the originals as portraits; and those who were not acquainted might, by the help of ideas gathered from various sources, arrive at some notion, at least, of what the species described was like. After the lapse of a certain period, this cannot be done; and then the tale, purporting to be a tale of manners, fails in its object. It must then wait until time has thrown around it the veil of antiquity; and what would fail to interest as a tale of the day—when no longer suited to the day—may interest, perhaps, at some distant day, as a tale of by-gone

story. The events of this year will be felt throughout the future history of our land—effacing, scattering all traces of the past, as surely as if those traces were marked on the sands of the desert, or the waters of the sea. A year, memorable, if for nothing else, for the death of *him* who once ruled, as king, though uncrowned, the millions of this Island, and whose name was the *shibboleth* which proved brotherhood; for whether eulogized as the Liberator, denounced as the Agitator, revered as the Demigod, branded as the Demagogue, O'CONNELL'S name was a watchword. Identified with Ireland as her bane or her blessing, not the least extraordinary of the many extraordinary events of this year is, that this her champion—this her darling son—should have breathed his

last in any but Irish air, or bequeathed his heart to any but Irish earth.

One word more. We beg most distinctly and emphatically to disclaim all idea of taking the picture of any individual to adorn our pages withal. The characters are not those of individuals, but of classes. Should a name, however, be tacked to each of our personages, which was never given by us, their sponsor—a practice by no means uncommon in the locality where our scene is laid, and where, of course, they are most likely to meet those who may claim them as old acquaintances—all we can do is to take this pertinacity in good part, as a compliment, in fact, to our power of individualizing generalities.

And now, gentle reader, deal gently with

us, we pray. In these days, when everybody writes because everybody else does, what reader can venture to say how long he may remain a reader only; nor, consequently, how soon it may come to his turn to crave indulgence from others, as we now do from him.

JANUARY, 1848.

THE CHANGELING.

CHAPTER I.

A GROUP of ladies are seated round a tea-table, in a certain town of that country famed, some fifteen or twenty years ago, for its fighting, laughing, starving, drinking, loving, murdering, keen, though easily deluded, mischievous, obliging, ignorant, intelligent, blundering, acute, interesting, tormenting population.

The ladies are of various ages—from sixteen to sixty, inclusive; but amongst this mass of frills, flowers, cap-borders, and ringlets, nothing indicating the presence of man is visible.

"Did you see the –5th march out, Gratty?" asked one young lady of her next neighbour.

"Oh! indeed I did—and cried enough, I can tell you! Nothing makes one so melancholy, I think, as seeing a regiment march out."

Here the fair Gratty breathed a gentle sigh; for among the departed heroes was a certain gallant captain, with whom she had carried on what was generally considered a very promising interchange of soft words and sweet smiles. But, alas! the rout came; and the gentleman had not yet "spoken out," as Gratty was led to expect he would, by all the great matrimonial authorities of her acquaintance. Love and marriage, unfortunately, are not always convertible terms.

"I'm sure my eyes must be quite red, Bidelia!"

"I declare, so they are! but how foolish of you, Gratty, when another regiment comes in its place, you know."

The last speaker was at that happy age, when flirtation is only flirtation—no sinister project lurking beneath, of securing the part-

ner at a ball, as a companion for life. Happy age!—that as yet knows nothing of the misery attendant on frustrated hopes; but pursues its laughing, dancing career, untroubled by calculations, whether time bestowed in this or that quarter may turn out most advantageous.

"Sure I saw them march in to-day! Such a lovely regiment, my dear! superior to the last! Don't you think so, Kitty Daly?" And the unsentimental Bidelia turned to her neighbour on the other side.

"Gracious me! to be sure—who would think of making such a comparison?"

Who, indeed, could think of instituting a comparison between a departed regiment, and one just arrived?

"I hear this is a very nice regiment, Mrs. Flanagan," Kitty continued—"loads of single men in it."

"I desire, Kitty Daly," replied the person addressed—a tall, sinewy woman, with a face which wanted only the appendage of a beard,

to exclude its owner from all female privileges—"I desire that you'll never open your lips to me again about officers—any of you—the longest day you live! They are a shabby, spunging set—all of their cloth ever I seen!—that will eat your dinners—drink your wine—dance out your carpets—and then some fine day march off, without ever having the manners to make any return for all the civility they have been treated with! I'm heartily sorry I ever let one of them darken my doors!—a parcel of idle vagabonds, dressed out at the expense of the nation—and for what? I declare, latterly, I don't see any use in an army at all! To the last, I thought we would have made something of that confounded –5th. After the way they went on, who could dream they would have the assurance to march, without "with your leave," or "by your leave!" My hearty curse after them, the schemers! wherever they go."

And Mrs. Flanagan, finding herself under

the necessity of pausing to take breath, threw back her head, and twirled her thumbs—her usual mode of marking satisfaction with herself, and dissatisfaction with others; the dissatisfaction in this instance being directed against a numerous class, for it included all those military individuals to whom she had ever given an invitation to tea, and who had not repaid the civility by allowing her to give him a wife into the bargain. The satisfaction was called forth by a pleasing consciousness of her oratorical powers, which, for copiousness and vituperation, might indeed have successfully contested the palm of eloquence with the great liberator himself.

"God be with the old times!" cried a mother of seven daughters, four of whom she had married, *nolentes*, *volentes*, to officers—*Anglice*, whether they would or not—the officers we mean—"God be with the old times!—the army was as much to the girls as the boys then; but that's all changed now, to my sor-

row !" And the old lady laid her hand on her heart and sighed.

"We can't get our boys itself into the army now," observed the mother of half-a-score of gawky sons, too ignorant for a profession requiring much learning, but of course far too genteel for trade.

"The peace has ruined us all; fine young men, my dear ma'am, like my sons there, kicking their heels at home, that formerly could get made majors of for asking."

"No doubt of it," rejoined the mother of daughters; "it's the peace, sure enough, that done all the mischief. As long as the war lasted, and for a short period after, hadn't we a fine standing army?—not to talk of our own gentlemen, that used to stop quietly at home, and marry in God's good time, fair and easy; but now we've neither one nor the other. The army is gone to the dogs; and nothing must do our own men now, but to go travelling, and if you haven't the means of pursuing them

about from post to pillar, you may bid adieu to getting rid of your girls. It's wonderful how scarce the men are grown ; you can't get one for love or money." And Mrs. O'Keefe shook her head very dolorously.

"Pooh ! nonsense, my dear ma'am," cried Mrs. Flanagan, "it's neither peace or war that make men plenty or scarce. Since ever I can remember, and that's a good fifty years, husbands were hard to be had, and if left to themselves, 'tis few of 'em ever you'd see, take my word for it ! No ; but I'll tell you what done it all ; the men have gone to the bad entirely, even since they left off drinking and fighting."

"Wouldn't one think it ought to be quite the other way?" timidly asked a pretty fair-haired girl, who sat a little behind the last speaker, half buried beneath her huge sleeves.

"Wouldn't one think !" repeated Mrs. Flanagan, deridingly—"wouldn't one think trash? Don't talk of what you don't nnderstand, and I'll be obleeged to you, Anna Maria."

Mrs. Flanagan proceeded in her former oratorical and oracular style.

"I say 'tis leaving off drinking and fighting that done it; and I'll tell you why. A man, when he's drunk, says many a thing he'd think twice of, before he'd say it sober; and that he'd take good care to forget in the morning, if he wasn't reminded by a father or brother. There's nothing in the world equal to a pistol for refreshing a man's memory."

"I declare then, of all things, I'd hate a man that could be frightened into marrying me!" exclaimed Kitty Daly.

"Maybe so, my dear; talk's cheap, at any rate," rejoined Mrs. Flanagan. "But for my part, who am not so nice, I'd be glad every girl I wish well to—and yourself among the number, Kitty—had a good husband a-piece, no matter how you came by him. Believe it from me, who am old enough to be your grandmother, Kitty, there never was a man yet married a girl, who wasn't frightened or bam-

boozled into it. Take your choice. Coax, if you're able ; why not ? But, faith, my dear, if you can't manage him in one way, you must try the other. All I'm sorry for is, they're grown too crafty to say any thing a girl's family can take hold of. There's the devil of it, ladies; God forgive me for cursing !"

" The serious of the group shook their heads, and looked thoughtful. The younger portion tittered, and peeped into each other's eyes.

The fair conclave was startled by a knock at the street door.

" That's Frank O'Connor's rap," observed Gratty O'Keefe.

" No ! it isn't," said Kitty Daly, who was, by the way, a proficient in discriminating the intonations of knockers, acted upon by masculine energy. " I don't know whose it is, but certainly it is not Frank O'Connor's," she added, in a tone of decision.

" 'Tis my son Peter's rap," said Mrs. Quin.

Peter belonged to a class whose raps are never distinguished, because never watched for by any except their mothers, viz., the hopers and expectants of the social economy.

As Peter happened to be ugly as well as poor, had he not fortunately been something of a scamp, he might have descended to the grave without a nod or a smile. Peter, or as he was generally designated, Peter Harry Joe (his father's christian name being tugged to his own, in order to distinguish him from five Peters and three Peter Harrys, who all gloried in the same generic patronymic of Quin) was, to do him justice, as idle and busy, mischievous and good-natured a young gentleman as one would be apt to find in any country town of "the gem" and "flower of the earth."

The very girl he had been teasing, till she was ready to cry, he would, perhaps, the minute afterwards praise to some man "worth while;" and *vice versa*, he has been known

to slip pepper into the snuff-box of the identical old lady whose gratitude he had previously obtained by "taking a hand" in her favorite game. He cut bread and butter to perfection, but while apparently absorbed in the exercise of his benevolent and public spirited function, he would contrive to sprinkle salt with the sugar,—a jest highly relished by all except the lady of the house, and such of the company as happened to be thirsty. He was the good-humoured escort of any and every female acquaintance not possessed of a gentleman of her own; but while conducting her home, he was taxing his memory or invention (our friend Peter Harry Joe was not particular which faculty he exercised) for all the offensive comments made upon her by "just the very persons in the world she would least have suspected." And hence, before the week had ended, girls, hitherto inseparable, tossed their heads and passed one another by without speaking; and formal curtsies, or biting sarcasms, according

to the taste of the parties, were exchanged between intimates of fifty years' standing. Peter Harry Joe was a capital squib writer, and indefatigable concoctor of amusing and provoking stories.

Let not the English reader exclaim at the above collocation of words as indicative of the writer's Irish origin. We have employed the expression advisedly, considering ourselves warranted in so doing, not only by a certain rhetorical license which permits the use of contradictory epithets, but also, by logic and experience. For who has not found that the jest most provoking to himself is almost invariably the most amusing to every body else?

Now, although these said stories have been once and again "brought home" to Peter Harry Joe, he managed some way or other, on each successive occasion, to have as "good a rise" as ever he had had. Nor were the exploits of Peter Harry Joe confined within the precincts of his native town. He was a fre-

quent and welcome visitor at country houses; for he was a proficient at small plays, and possessed the rare talent of cutting apples to resemble candle ends, so ingeniously, as to deceive the sharpest eyes; and which, having lighted, he would put into his mouth, and cranch; while the ladies initiated into the mystery, laughed, "ready to die," and those not let into the secret, screamed with horror, and cried—

"Oh! you horrid creature! For shame, Peter Harry Joe!"

But, unluckily, a disjunctive is sure to intrude into all panegyrical sentences, especially when the subject chances to be Peter Harry Joe—but Peter would hide his hostess's keys, and transfer the locks of trunks or wardrobes, in which might be deposited the dress clothes of young ladies who had only just returned from their ride, drive, or walk, in time "to get their things on smart for dinner." He would fill the gentlemen's boots with water, and put

butter in their hats, and if the quizzed got cross, there let them. The quizzer had as good Connaught blood in his veins as any of them, and was not more ready to joke than to fight.

Such, and such like, was the Peter Harry Joe whom we left in the act of seeking admittance at Mrs. Brown's hospitable door.

"I don't think 'tis Peter Harry Joe's knock, but Frank O'Connor's," observed Mrs. Flanagan.

"Oh, I couldn't be mistaken," replied Mrs. Quin. "'Tis my son Peter's knock, for certain."

"'Tis either one or the other," said the lady of the house. "For though I tried the town all over for beaus, as I told you already, I could not get any to come but them two, not but they are the best—to my fancy, at least. Poor Peter Harry Joe is as good and pleasant a creature as ever lived; and for Captain O'Connor, he is the nicest beau in it, I hear everybody say. Don't you think so, Miss Daly?

Miss Daly laughed, and declared "upon her honour, she was the worst judge in the world, of a beau."

"Ah, don't be going on with your capers, Kitty," cried Mrs. Flanagan. "When there's nobody by but ourselves, what's the good of making yourself out a fool? I'm afraid, though, we haven't much chance of him, Mrs. Brown," she continued, turning to the lady of the house, "now that he has staid so late. I suppose he was kept by them letters he told you he had to write to Ballymagawley."

But before Mrs. Brown had time to say "very like, indeed"—her usual rejoinder to all observations—the door opened, and in walked Captain O'Connor, followed by the facetious Mr. Quin.

"Better late than never, gentlemen," cried the hostess, extending, as she spoke, a hand to each.

"Well, then, for goodness' sake, will you tell us what kept you so late, Captain O'Connor, inquired Mrs. Flanagan.

"I have a thousand apologies to make,

Mrs. Brown; I hope I've the pleasnre of seeing you well, Mrs. Flanagan," and the captain proceeded to notice each lady of the group, in a neat and appropriate manner; bestowing a shake of the hand on some; a tender pressure on others; a nod or a smile, or distant bow; according as the degree of intimacy might warrant. For, although polite to all, he carefully avoided encouraging the pretensions of any acquaintance, male or female. No young lady could, by the utmost latitude of interpretation, construe a compliment of Captain O'Connor's into a declaration of love; nor would individuals of his own sex select him as the "good natured fellow," from whom they could borrow whatever he had, and they had not.

While the man of sense and consequence was thus employed, the man of wit had set the cat and dog fighting, made the young ladies blush, and cry shame; and had hidden all the reticules, snuff-boxes, aud spectacles he could lay his hands upon. At a loss for any further

mischief just then, he thought he might as well sit down and be quiet.

"Frank ! you hadn't the manners to answer Mrs. Flanagan's question. 'Tis long before any lady would ask what kept me, though ;" and Peter Harry Joe looked arch.

"A good reason why," said Mrs. Flanagan ; "because you are never in time any where."

"And whether I am or no ; it doesn't much signify. Well ! no one will ever snap me up, and marry me against my will ; that's one comfort I have, at any rate."

"Will you let somebody speak, beside yourself ?" Mrs. Flanagan rejoined, darting, as she spoke, an angry glance at the amusing Peter, whose drollery was not always to her taste—a fact he was not slow to discover ; but which, so far from repressing, served rather to stimulate his vivacious energies.

Peter Harry Joe whistled a jig.

"Do you know the name of that tune, Mrs. Flanagan ?"

The lady did not vouchsafe to reply.

"A very nice one, I can tell you. 'Money in both pockets,' 'tis called." And Peter winked over at Captain O'Connor. "Come, man, let Mrs. Flanagan hear what kept you away from her."

"Why, really, my fair friends must excuse me," replied the captain, with a bow expressive of mingled coxcombry and pomposity; "for latterly, I've been so overwhelmed with business, that I have not had a moment to myself, I most solemnly protest! The Ballymagawley people coming home, and having to look after everything—for it is totally out of the question to trust the fellows of that country—I am persecuted out of my existence—I positively am! It's the most insufferable nuisance imaginable, seeing after those vagabonds of stewards, at Ballymagawley. Nothing, I assure you, but the friendship I entertain for Mr. Whaley, could induce me to remain in the agency; for it's the most deuced bore you can conceive."

"Oh, yes! what a bore it is!" whispered Peter Harry Joe, to Gratty O'Keefe. "Six hundred a-year for quill-driving, and playing the great man! I suppose," he added aloud, "that the Whaleys don't stop going through."

"They seldom do," rejoined Captain O'Connor. "My blessing to them! Who would stay in this cursed town, that have anywhere else to go? It's growing stupider and stupider every day. By all that's gracious, if it goes on in this way much longer, I must blow my brains out."

"God between us and harm!" exclaimed Mrs. Quin, crossing herself, "don't say any thing so dreadful as that, Peter Harry."

"Oh, never mind him, my dear woman; just let him talk on," said Mrs. Flanagan. "He will stop when he's tired."

"'Pon my honour! 'tis a shame for you, Peter!" observed Gratty O'Keefe, scarcely able to speak from fits of laughing at the bright and original idea. "You shouldn't say that, you know—sure he shouldn't, Captain O'Connor?"

"Undoubtedly not, Miss O'Keefe. Death is a very solemn consideration—very solemn, indeed! But no civilian, probably, can form a proper estimate of the subject. I think it requires to have been a military man to have seen the shuddering relics of mortality strewing the battle-field, to form any conception of the awfulness of death. It really is a most ghastly spectacle—the most picturesque thing you can possibly conceive! There was an officer of ours who wrote some lines on the subject, which partial friends thought pretty. I gave them to you, Miss Daly, for your album —did I not?"

"Oh, indeed now, Captain O'Connor, we all know who that officer was," replied the young lady addressed, who harboured certain designs against the gallant captain's freedom, which she regularly laid aside whenever a more promising flirtation presented itself, and as regularly resumed as soon as the said promising flirtation had ended, as most affairs of the kind do end in disppointment. But, although,

Miss Daly flattered herself that she had successfully concealed her manœuvres from the object of her attack, she had grievously failed; for be it known to the reader, Captain O'Connor was a sagacious,—a marvellously sagacious gentleman.

"They are beautiful verses, I declare; and so much admired.

"You must not betray me, though," the captain whispered, "or, upon the honour of an officer and a gentlemen, I'll never forgive you, Miss Daly!"

"You promised *me* a copy long ago, but you're a shocking faithless man, like all your sex—no believing a word any of you say!" and Gratty O'Keefe looked pensive and interesting.

Once upon a time, Gratty O'Keefe might have been Mrs. O'Connor; but that time had passed. "There's a tide in the affairs" of women, as well as of men. Gratty's mamma would not let her take him then; and neither

herself nor her mamma, by their united exertions, could ever induce him to take her afterwards.

"Hold your gab, Gratty," cried Peter Harry Joe. "What the mischief do *you* care about poetry and albums? You'd rather have a proposal of marriage than all the poetry in Europe, I'll engage. Don't look so cross, Gratty, or nobody will ever ask you. Sure I'm only saying what everybody else says, or thinks, at any rate. Did you ever try praying to Saint Joseph, Miss O'Keefe, my dear? There was an aunt of mine who got her three girls off her hands (the ugliest girls ever I laid my eyes on, by the same token) all within the year; and she always told me Saint Joseph gave her a lift. Hadn't you better try, Gratty?"

"I wish you would let me alone, Peter Harry Joe."

"Oh, then, 'tis you would be sorry if I took you at your word," he replied, with a laugh.

"It's better to dance with poor Peter Harry Joe, than not to dance at all. And whisper, Gratty: 'tis not my fault if the –8th went off without you, for, upon my soul! I said every thing I could remember or invent in your favour—I did, as I hope to be saved!—Kitty—Kitty Daly."

"For God's sake, don't howl at one so! What is it?" Miss Daly rejoined, provoked at being interrupted in a semi-flirting dialogue with Captain O'Connor.

"I was just going to tell you, that I would do all in my power for you with the new regiment; but since you fly at me like a cat, I've a mind to give myself no trouble about your affairs at all, and reserve my interest for Gratty, and the girls who know how to behave themselves. Pray, Miss Daly, may I ask if ever you heard of the four sisters I got married once—just by a stroke or two of the pen? Hey! did you?"

"Oh, mercy! are you at that old story

again ? I declare I'm tired to death of it !" But Miss Daly now spoke in a deprecating tone, for she was aware how useless, if not mischievous, it might be to indulge in any other with Peter Harry Joe.

"No matter; 'tis a story you can never hear too often ;" and Peter proceeded, for the five-hundredth, nay perhaps for the ten thousandth, time, to relate his favourite hoax.

"You must know, ladies and gentlemen, that some years ago there were four sisters living here—upon nothing but hope and flirting. Very good-natured girls they were too, and pretty ; but for all that, nobody came to marry them, nobody came to woo !—like poor Gratty and Kitty here. I did all I could to persuade some charitable Christians to take pity on them, as I do for these girls now, and with the same success. People asked me why the d—l I did not set a good example, and marry one of them myself; and, faith ! I was puzzled what answer to give, just as I am

now. I would do any thing to oblige any girl, except to marry her."

"Did you ever hear such impudence?" Kitty whispered to Gratty. "He's enough to provoke a saint! I'm getting quite to hate him, I declare!"

"Hush, Kitty! don't talk while I'm speaking. Well, what did I do? You must know these girls had a brother in the West Indies —an overseer, or something that way—so I just killed him, one fine morning, of yellow fever, having first made a will for him, leaving five thousand pounds among his four sisters. In three weeks after the news came, the four were buckled: the lovers did not wait to see the money arrive, because that wouldn't look pretty. Wasn't it cleverly done—hey?"

"Cleverly done!—that's all you think of. But how did it end?"

"How did it end, Kitty! Sure it ended in marriage, don't you know."

"Yes; but when the gentlemen discovered

their mistake, how cross they were! Such a cat-and-dog life as they led! 'Pon my honour, 'twas horrid to hear of it."

"And how in the world was I to blame for that? Sure I couldn't get them fortunes, if I died for it! All I could do was to get them husbands, and that I did. And as for a cat-and-dog life, why they would sooner have cross husbands than none at all: I'm certain of that much."

"And you had like to get shot for your pains; 'twas near being your *last* joke," observed Kitty.

"More's the pity, if it had; but kind daddy took care of his own. I wasn't shot, you see, nor ever will be either, please God! I hope to die—like a sober, quiet person, as I am—in my bed, reflecting upon all the good actions of my life, and this among the number. Frank! I can never get you to laugh at that story."

"Why really, my good fellow, I don't know whether it is quite the thing to laugh at,"

replied the captain, whose sympathies were always enlisted on such subjects in favour of his own sex.

"Laugh at!" Mrs. Flanagan repeated, putting on a sanctimonious face. "Who could laugh at such a thing?—the idea of deceiving any gentleman in such a manner."

"By the way, talking of marriage reminds me of a report I heard the other day about Miss Whaley: they say she's going to be married to Lord Killybeg's son," observed Mrs. Brown, looking towards Mrs. Flanagan, as the person most likely, from her relations with both families, to throw light on the subject.

But before the lady had time to answer this appeal, the mischievous Peter, in order to mortify her, and puzzle the captain, cried out—

"Why don't you go to the fountain-head at once? Ask Frank, and he will tell you all about it!"

Frank twisted his features into sundry con-

volutions, sucked in his jaws, drew down his brows, turned his head to the right, then to the left, tapped his boot, settled his whiskers, pulled up his stock, looked wise, looked important, looked sly, and said nothing; for the best of all possible reasons—because he had nothing to say, although, very naturally, he did not choose to confess his ignorance. There might be a marriage in contemplation, for anything he knew to the contrary, and there might not—time would tell. Meanwhile, he flattered himself to have so dextrously managed, that, whichever turn matters should take, his accurate knowledge of the Ballymagawley proceedings could never hereafter, by any possibility, be called in question.

But the captain's manner had rather excited than baffled the curiosity of the fair ones, who now set upon him in such numbers, and with so much vehemence, that had he not possessed wonderful resources of mind in all cases of emergency, he must inevitably have fallen into

the snare laid for him by his friend Peter Harry Joe.

"Now, ladies, can you possibly imagine that such a clumsy fellow as I am, would be trusted with secrets of that tender nature? No, no; in matters of love and marriage," and the captain looked arch, "I consider Mrs. Flanagan the person to be appealed to."

A general laugh rewarded the captain's sly allusion.

"He's mighty droll," observed Mrs. O'Keefe, who continued still to keep an eye upon him for Gratty.

"And mighty well-informed, too, I hear everybody say; though you would never know it by him, he's so affable," remarked Mrs. Quin, who was desirous of having her son Peter employed as sub-agent to the Ballymagawley property.

"Mrs. Flanagan," said the lady of the house, "the captain has referred us to you. What do you say? Is Miss Whaley going to be married to Mr. Foster?"

"Indeed, if she was, I think I should be as apt to know it as most people." And Mrs. Flanagan began twirling her thumbs, with an air of mingled wrath and self-complacency which puzzled the company; but which, lest it puzzle the reader also, we will endeavour to explain.

She was extremely displeased with Peter Harry Joe for his impertinent attempt "to make little of her," at the same time that she felt a secret pride in the consciousness of how matters really stood, and that it was not in his power, nor in that of any other fellow of the kind, "to pull her down."

As Mrs. Flanagan does not at present seem disposed to state the source or the extent of her information, we should be reluctant to say for her what she does not choose to say for herself; we shall, therefore, merely add, that few persons, possessed of a secret flattering to their self-importance, would have guarded it with such faithfulness and discretion as this worthy lady. So little, indeed, was there of

the mystery usually observable in those who know something that nobody else knows, that the captain was sure Mrs. Flanagan was as ignorant as himself upon the subject; and all the rest of the party, with the exception of Peter Harry Joe, were convinced that he alone had been admitted into the Ballymagawley cabinet.

"At any rate, whoever she marries," said Mrs. Daly, "I shall wish her well, for her father's sake."

"The best man in the world!" cried Mrs. Brown.

"I never met his equal," observed Mrs. Quin.

"Nor I," said Mrs. O'Keefe.

"Isn't it very odd, though, she has not got married before now?—such a fine fortune, and every thing!" remarked Kitty Daly.

"There's the less reason to hurry herself," said Mrs. Flanagan.

"The gentlemen of the county do not reckon her handsome, I believe."

"What great judges they are!" retorted Mrs. Flanagan.

"The fact of the matter is," said Captain O'Connor, "Miss Whaley is not deficient so much in beauty as in affibility—in a certain *je ne sais quoi*—otherwise, I doubt not, she would meet with general admiration."

"General admiration!" Mrs. Flanagan repeated, disdainfully. "Ah! do you think Miss Whaley would be bothered with them or their admiration? Tom, Bill, and Dick, that aren't fit to sit in one room with her! General admiration, indeed!"

"May I ask, Mrs. Flanagan, whether you mean to assert that all the gentlemen of the county are beneath Miss Whaley's notice?" inquired the captain, sententiously.

"Oh, I hate all such 'fending and proving! —what do I mean by this, and what do I mean by that! I say what I think, and what

I please ; and let those that like it, pick whatever meaning they fancy—they're welcome—much good may do them with it !"

" I can assure you," rejoined the captain, there is no person whose talents and acquirements I rate more highly than Miss Whaley's ; no person in whose society I could pass a more agreeable, or indeed profitable, half-hour."

" The d—l take your impudence !" muttered Mrs. Flanagan.

" But, although I personally esteem and admire Miss Whaley," the captain continued, " I must admit I scarcely expect that others should entertain my sentiments ; her indifference to please is construed into haughtiness."

" And if she does hold her head high, what great wonder ? Heiress to ten thousand a-year !"

" My dear Mrs. Flanagan, I must beg to confine you to the question at issue, viz., why Miss Whaley is not more popular. We will not, therefore, if you please, touch upon the

point you have started—as to whether or not the possessors of large fortunes be thereby entitled, in their own opinion, or in that of others, to assume a tone of superiority. I shall merely beg leave to remind you, that such is not necessarily the consequence; and for an instance, take Mr. Whaley himself—who can possess more fascinating manners? People will make these comparisons, my dear Mrs. Flanagan:" and here the captain, pausing and looking round, read admiration of his oratory in more than one pair of bright eyes.

"Allow me to tell you, Captain O'Connor," said Mrs. Flanagan, "that I think her father's agent might leave it to others to run her down."

"Run her down! I most solemnly protest, on the word of an officer and a gentleman, that nothing was ever further from my thoughts. On the contrary, did I not premise my observations by expressing my individual

respect and admiration ? Really, I must say, Mrs. Flanagan, that you are sometimes a little too sharp. To think that I should require to be reminded of the friendship existing between Mr. Whaley and me, is rather extraordinary, I must say."

The captain, usually a miracle of caution, was provoked to find he had committed himself. He pulled up his stock, and tried to look unconcerned ; while Mrs. Flanagan twirled her thumbs—her customary gesture, as we have before stated, when wrathful—and that she was highly wrathful upon the present occasion, she took no pains to conceal.

Mrs. Brown, to divert the agent and the partisan of the Ballymagawley family from coming to logger-heads, asked the former, by way of turning the conversation into a more agreeable channel, whether he had seen the regiment march out that morning,

The gentleman replied he had been better engaged at the nunnery.

"And what were you doing there, captain? You must give an account of yourself."

"Very willingly. I was most delightfully engaged, listening to the sweetest singing I have heard for a long while."

"Ho, ho! flirting with Miss Dillon! No wonder that gentlemen have not time in the evening to take a quiet cup of tea, when they have been flirting all day. Oh, you rogue, you!"

"Come, come! Mrs. Brown; I spoke of sweet sounds, but said not a syllable of sweet words: remember that! However, I must admit that I never met a girl any where—the present company excepted," said the captain, bowing condescendingly to the young ladies assembled—"that a man would be more apt to say soft words to than Miss Dillon. She is a sweet creature; almost irresistible, 'pon my soul!"

"Heavens above!" exclaimed Kitty Daly;

"is it possible you admire Miss Dillon—a girl with cat's eyes !"

"Cat's eyes ! dove eyes you mean, I suppose—a beautiful soft hazel ; and her teeth ! I never saw such teeth in the course of my existence !"

"Yes ; they are white, certainly, and, according to some people's taste, perhaps well-shaped ; but they are just the sort that will soon go, I can tell you," rejoined Kitty, reddening with displeasure at the captain's enthusiasm.

"They are not gone yet, though," observed Peter Harry Joe, "and meanwhile he can admire them ; but her complexion, Kitty, what can you say against that ?"

"I don't deny she is fair ; but 'tis the fairness of a tallow-candle."

"Oh, come, that's too bad—likening our lovely stranger to a tallow-candle !" exclaimed the captain, affectedly.

"If you had compared her to a blush rose,

you would have been nearer the mark, Kitty; the colour mantling in her delicate cheek whenever she speaks, always gives me that idea," said Peter, influenced as much by the desire of annoying Miss Daly, as of defending Miss Dillon.

"That's all affectation and nonsense, by way of looking pretty," retorted Kitty. "She blushes just on purpose."

"Oh, then, I'd advise you to learn the knack with all convenient speed; it would be the making of you. How the —8th used to rave about her, to be sure! 'The blush rose,' that's what they called her. I don't know whether you ever chanced to notice rose-buds peeping from the military jackets: that was in compliment to Miss Dillon, as her name as well as emblem. If she had given them any encouragement, she might have had the pick and choose of the regiment, I can tell you for your comfort."

"I don't believe one word of that!" ex-

claimed Miss Daly; who had, however, notwithstanding the stoutness of her denial, some misgivings that Peter Harry Joe was not so very far wrong in his assertion. She recollected what a blaze of epaulettes had been observable round the piano whenever the stranger belle could be prevailed upon to play or sing, and how scantily attended whenever *she* performed; and what competition there used to be among the captains, and subalterns that might rank with captains, in a ball-room, at least (in virtue of being sons to men of fortune), to secure Miss Dillon as a partner; whereas, she and her compeers had to "put up" with the rejected candidates for Miss Dillon's favour, or with such lieutenants and ensigns as had little to recommend them except the colour of their coats. But, above all, she called to mind one proof that the afore-mentioned captains and stylish subalterns had given of their admiration—the most unequivocal proof, indeed, short of a regular declara-

tion, of man's regard for woman: they had offered their horses to Miss Dillon! Kitty, however, was not so unpractised in the ways of man, civil or military, as for an instant to imagine that these attentions necessarily implied "intentions." Many a regiment had gone as far with her as the –8th had with Miss Dillon; and yet——but Kitty, who was by no means deficient in penetration, argued syllogistically in this wise: "If the men demonstrated as much regard for Rose Dillon, without encouragement, as they did for her, Kitty Daly, with encouragement; if Rose Dillon had given them encouragement, would they not, in all probability, have demonstrated more?"

But, although Miss Daly thought this, it did not follow that she was to say thus.

"I don't believe one word about the –8th wanting to marry her, I can tell you—not one syllable."

"You needn't, sure, if you don't like," re-

joined Peter. "I should be sorry to vex you, Kitty."

Kitty gave him a look of unutterable disdain ; and, renewing her attack on O'Connor, said, with an air of pettish coquetry—

"I hope you admire Miss Dillon's figure, Captain O'Connor."

"Certainly—'tis perfection."

"Oh, Lord ! is it Miss Dillon's figure perfection ? You have not heard my riddle yet, I see. How is Miss Dillon's figure like a giblet-pie ?"

"How, then ?"

"Guess, can't you, captain."

"The stupidest fellow in the world at making out riddles, I do verily believe. My genius does not lie in that direction, positively."

"No, nor in any other either," muttered Mrs. Flanagan, whose displeasure seemed rather increased than diminished by the tone that the conversation had assumed ; for, although apparently absorbed in her game of

loo, she had contrived to keep an eye upon the young people, and overhear what was going forward.

"So you give up, Captain O'Connor," said Miss Daly. "I must tell you, then. Because 'tis all legs and wings."

"Capital, capital! Kitty Daly!" exclaimed Mrs. Flanagan. "I give you credit for that; 'tis a right good one, and has the merit of being true as well as droll."

And all the ladies, young and old, loudly applauded Kitty Daly's riddle; notwithstanding which, and the many arguments advanced to disprove Miss Dillon's pretensions to beauty, either of face or figure, the gentlemen most obstinately persisted in maintaining them.

"Well, she may be a beauty for any thing I know or care," observed Kitty, tossing her pretty head; but I can tell you, when she loses her teeth, and her mouth falls in, and her nose and chin meet like a pair of nut-

crackers, she won't be a beauty then, at any rate; she will be the ugliest woman that ever was seen, one of these days."

"One of these days! Bravo, Kitty!" exclaimed Peter Harry Joe, bursting into a fit of most provoking laughter, in which the captain joined. "That's the best thing I ever heard; as if a man cared a curse how ugly a woman might be when she grew old, provided she looked pretty when young."

"Oh, for the love of goodness!" cried Mrs. Flanagan, "let me hear no more of her name, for I'm sick of it. From morning till night, 'tis nothing but Rose Dillon; I am fairly bothered with it all. Since she is such a favourite with the gentlemen, why don't they marry her at once, and leave us in peace?"

"There are many very well inclined, I make no doubt," the captain rejoined.

"What's to hinder them; why don't they?" retorted Mrs Flanagan.

"Humph! some are too poor, perhaps;

others too prudent to follow their inclinations; and again, a few individuals may be, like myself, not marrying men."

"Take care, for all that, herself and that swadding old maid of an aunt of her's, don't tie you up, neck and heels, for all your cleverness, Frank O'Connor! Many a one as keen as you has been made a fool of before now, by gentry of their sort. I always have a dread of your smooth-going people. Such clipping of the king's English as these go on with; mimping up their mouths as if they thought one would steal their teeth if they didn't keep their lips screwed together. So mighty genteel!—the Lord save us from such gentility, say I!"

"Sure you don't expect English people to speak with a brogue, like yourself—do you?" asked Peter Harry Joe.

"If it goes to that, then, I'd be glad to know what brought English people here at all; a place where they have neither kith nor kin,

or one who ever heard talk of them itself before they came in it. Take my word for it, whatever reasons they had for coming here are reasons best known to themselves," and here Mrs. Flanagan nodded significantly over at the gentlemen.

"Egad, I believe so. The devil's in it, if people mustn't know their own reasons better than any one else can know them." observed Peter Harry Joe, affecting to understand literally the foregoing observation.

"You didn't take me up before I'm down, Mr. Quin," retorted Mrs. Flanagan, angrily. "I expressed myself properly; and whether or no, 'tisn't to you I'll come when I want to be instructed in grammar, or delicacy either; for you knew well enough what I meant, only that I didn't choose to speak plain before them girls. As for that cock-and-a-bull story she tells about a brother she lost twenty years ago, and that indeed she expects to find here; and a father, dead and gone before she was born, that

she chooses to say belonged to this county, when everybody knows there never was any one of the name in it. If she hadn't got into some scrape at home, wherever that is, we never should have seen 'the blush rose'—depend upon that!"

Peter Harry Joe burst into a loud and exceedingly provoking, because it was evidently an incredulous, laugh; and Captain O'Connor begged to assure Mrs. Flanagan that he dissented *in toto* from her view of the case. Miss Dillon was as sweet, modest, and interesting a girl as ever he had encountered in the whole course of his existence.

"How innocent you talk!—would she tell you she was anything else? Take care what you are about, though; that's my advice."

At this juncture, Mrs. Brown's butler—a boy, somewhat ragged and not over clean—shouldered himself into the room.

"There's one below that wants Captain O'Connor, ma'am."

"Wants me!—desire him to go about his business instantaneously, whoever he is!—I am engaged. One of these Ballymagawley fellows, whose cattle is in pound, I suppose," the captain added, with all the dignity of a man in office. "There's a rascal now, came forty miles and upwards, to persecute me!"

In a few moments the boy-butler returned.

"So he will not take his answer," cried the captain, looking so awful that Mrs. Brown's butler, and all the ladies were struck dumb.

"I shall soon stop this work," and forthwith the captain strode to the top of the staircase; whence he might be heard by the ladies within, as well as by the Ballymagawley tenant below.

"I say you blackguard, you, how dare you presume to disturb me at any lady's house, in this manner? Be off directly, or I shall make a public example of you!—I shall, you may depend upon it!"

"Is that the answer I'll bring him, sir?"

"The answer you'll bring him!—so the va-

gabond did not think it worth his while to come himself!"

"He hadn't time, he said, sir."

"Hadn't time, the blackguard!—what townland does he live on?—Hey?

"Ne'er a one at all, sir."

"In that case then, what can he have to say to me? Come, sir, don't keep me here all night!—I repeat what has that atrocious miscreant got to say, disturbing me at unseasonable hours?"

"Nothing in life, sir, but just to give the message Mr. Whaley's man gave him."

"Why—what—I don't understand a word you are saying."

"Misther Whaley that's come to Doherty's there below, sir, and the boy that does be in it, was bringing up the dinner, and so he axed me, would I go for him, and I said I would, sir."

"Bless my soul!—Mr. Whaley come!—why did you not say so at once, my honest fellow?"

And in a second, the captain had made his parting bow to the ladies, and, in another second, had reached the hall-door.

An event so important as the departure of Captain O'Connor may appropriately terminate our long chapter.

CHAPTER II.

We purpose devoting this, our coming chapter to a portrait—or, to speak more modestly, a sketch—for we do indeed entertain considerable doubts as to our capability fully to pourtray the original—the said original being no less a personage than Mrs. Flanagan; whose physiognomy, moral and intellectual, it might puzzle a far more able hand than ours to delineate.

Although somewhat stricken in years, and by no means fair to look upon, even in her best days, Mrs. Flanagan had become a bride, for the first time, not very many years before her introduction to the reader.

Well—if neither young nor handsome, doubtless the lady possessed, as an equivalent,

a less interesting, but more durable qualification, viz.—money. Alas! no—Bess Carroll was the eleventh child of a younger son—an Irish younger son!

But before we enter upon her matrimonial career, it might be advisable to give some idea of her proceedings, previous to her change of name and state—to tell who she was, and what she was. And yet this is by no means so easy as might be supposed. To begin, for instance, with "who she was," how can we expect to make the English reader "sensible" of the precise "whereabouts" of Bess Carroll, when it would require almost to be Connaught-born, as well as bred, to comprehend so anomalous a position?—as an off-shoot from the house of Clochballymore, entitled to associate upon terms of equality with the best, and yet her want of education and refinement seeming to render her admittance among them rather a privilege than a right. However that might be, Bess Carroll's drollery in youth,

and shrewdness in advanced life, ensured her a cordial reception at several houses of "consequence," where she was welcome to remain as many months as she found agreeable or convenient.

Bess was a useful person; she made tea—looked after the servants—humoured the children—watched the governess at those houses where the husband happened to be gay, or the sons grown up—listened to all the old stories—laughed at all the old jokes—praised a good dinner, and passed off a bad one—had receipts for all manner of puddings and pies—and recipes innumerable for coughs and tooth-ache, and corns, and sore eyes, and whitlows, and burns, and scalds, and chapped hands, and chilblains, and asthma, and agues, and rheumatism; and in short, for every evil flesh is heir to, Bess Carroll had an infallible recipe.

Bess was a treasure, her female friends said; and such of the male ones as chanced to be quiet, home-keeping husbands, joined in the

eulogium; nay, even the single men frequently recommended Bess to one another, as the materials for "a capital wife;" however, none was selfish enough to monopolize the bustling, pleasant friend, so universally esteemed.

Years rolled on, and Bess began to have a very great longing for a house of her own. About this time an old intimate took her departure for another world, leaving to her disconsolate widower the charge of five ugly, flirting daughters, with a fortune of one thousand pounds among them; which thousand pounds was a bond on an estate that had been twenty years in chancery, and bid fair to be as many more.

Now Bess was reputed to be vastly expert "in getting off" girls thus circumstanced; and accordingly, three or four times a-week Mr. Flanagan sauntered into whatever house in the town happened, for the time being, to be her head quarters—walking along, from side to side, his hands behind his back—to appeal to her

sympathy and acknowledged talents, in behalf of his daughters.

"Miss Carroll, my dear, what am I to do with them girls," he would say, in a tone of affliction. "From Sunday morning till Saturday night they are afther the officers—walking —walking all day ; and at night, nothing but dancing going on !—such tattering of shoes, and wearing of dresses as never was seen, since the world was a world !—if I don't get them married, and soon too, I am fairly a ruined man, Miss Carroll. I may as well go drownd myself at onst ! There I am—robbed and plundered by them villains of servants, and can't get one of my five gerrils to see after my property—not a ha'porth in my house kept under lock and kay, Miss Carroll !—and you'd think 'twas their life I was asking, when, of an odd day, I'd bid them stop at home to put a stitch in their clothes that's going to rack and ruin !—except at breakfast and dinner, a sight of them gerrils I never see, and though they're

ruining me—God help me!—doing no good to themselves—that's what's breaking my heart! and ah! Miss Carroll, my dear! if you seen their bill to Mrs. Mahony for bonnets and artificial flowers, 'twould make your hair stand on end."

Here Mr. Flanagan would pause and look very doleful; and Bess would respond thus:—

"But, Mr. Flanagan, why need you care?—sure 'tisn't you will have to pay after all, maybe. How do you know but you may be dead and gone, and lying peaceable in your grave; and that the "happy man" will be the one to get the tap on the shoulder?"

"Ay, ay—the happy man! when we get him! but I see little chance of any such luck as that coming to my door, whether I'm in it or no; and indeed, for that matter, I wish to the Blessed Virgin I wasn't in it at all, so I'd get somebody to stand in my shoes; but ever since Captain Green was arrested the day after the wedding, for his wife's bills, the army

is got mighty shy of the gerrils here,—and to say the truth, if we make the case our own, we can't much wonder at it; 'tis bad enough to marry a gerril that hasn't six-pence, without having to pay for all the dress she has been bedizening herself in, to invaigle other people —but who had better luck than what he had, and lave him to pay the piper."

Such was the usual exordium of all Mr. Flanagan's harangues; the subject matter being invariably the same—to wit, an appeal to Miss Carroll's experience, as to the best mode of proceeding for "catching his man."

After having stated her views, in the case or cases submitted, Miss Carroll generally summed up her decision thus:—

"But after all, my dear sir, you will manage it as well by yourself; what's the use of my advice?—unless one is on the spot, you know, one can never tell what turn things may take. What is good advice Thursday, will be bad advice Friday, perhaps—and what might be bad

advice Friday, may turn out good for Saturday; so I am afraid I may only be doing mischief by giving my opinion at all, when I am not on the spot, you know."

On other occasions she would decline altogether what she called "meddling or making."

"'Tis a delicate thing, Mr. Flanagan, my dear, for strangers to interfere in other people's concerns; your daughters are headstrong, extravagant girls—I know that, as well as you can tell me; and the way they are going on, they won't leave you bread to eat in a year or two; but what right have I to tell them so?—faith, they'd bite my head off!—so least said, soonest mended, you know."

Mr. Flanagan understood perfectly what his friend Bess meant by being "on the spot,"—and "having no right to advise;" but for some time did not choose to follow the suggestion. He thought it hard (who would not?) to be obliged to take for his second wife, one older and uglier than the first.—But needs

must, when the——and he had no less than five imps, in the shape of daughters, driving him, as he and Bess both knew, to destruction; running him in debt at every shop in the town, upon the strength of the husbands they were to get, by their elegant dress, in every successive regiment; but regiment after regiment marched in, and marched out, full of young men "to the good" (a phrase of the Flanagan school, signifying unmarried men), and neither of the five misses were even a pin the better by it, however many pounds the worse their father might be; so, in process of time, and sore against her suitor's will, Bess Carroll became regularly installed at Whiskey Lodge (Mr. Flanagan's rus in urbe), as its mistress, with all the honor and glory thereto appertaining; namely, the right of watching and scolding, whenever and wherever she pleased, two servant maids, and one servant boy; and the undisputed privilege of darning dozens of stockings, and of making and repair-

ing sundry articles of male apparel—her bridegroom's wardrobe being in a sadly dilapidated condition; owing to an old maxim of the Miss Flanagans, "that it was the height of absurdity to lay out money or time upon clothes that never would be seen; and, if one had a handsome gown and coat on, who would be the wiser what one wore under?" Furthermore, Bess Carroll became possessor of a jaunting car, which only wanted wheels, and a back, and a coat of paint, "to be as nice a car as any in the county."

Mr. Flanagan's marriage, unlike most cases of the description, afforded more satisfaction to his children than to himself; Bess Carroll having convinced them that their father's wedding would be the certain harbinger of their own.

The result justified the prediction.

Within three years after Miss Carroll's accession to power, the five Miss Flanagans had evacuated the paternal roof, to the joy of all

parties concerned, not excepting, we may charitably hope, even the husbands.

"Glory be to our blessed Mother!" exclaimed Mrs. Flanagan, the day she packed off the last of the young ladies with her bridegroom—an ensign in a liver complaint, under orders for India—"I have worked my hands out of them all at last; and a troublesome job I have had of it, Lord knows! I can now sit down quietly, and enjoy myself for the rest of my days."

But Mrs. Flanagan, like many others, found that the attainment of her object had left a craving void in her soul; and as the great warrior sighed for more worlds to conquer, so the indefatigable match-maker sighed for more daughters to marry; she soon therefore became as busy on behalf of her neighbours' girls, as she had heretofore been in that of her own; and with such extraordinary success, that her authority on matrimonial affairs was considered, in her native town, as infallible as that of the Pope on matters of faith.

By degrees she insinuated herself into a sort of perpetual dictatorship over all the domestic and social arrangements of the town and its vicinity. A servant could not be hired or discharged, nor a son put into a profession, without consulting her; and if a young man of fortune arrived at a house twenty miles off, Mrs. Flanagan was sure to be informed of it, the communication being invariably accompanied by a request to proceed forthwith to the scene of action, in order to reconnoitre the weak points of the enemy; or as the phrase ran—"to come and see what sort he was, and which of the girls had best try for him."

Now, Mrs. Flanagan occupied the same position with respect to a certain party in families, as our late whig-radical administration did to a certain party in the state. She had introduced sundry levelling innovations on long established and long cherished usages, and recognised privileges. For instance, she has been known to single out the fifth girl in a

family, as the one that should try her luck for the stranger; the consequence of which was, that the lady was looked upon with suspicion, by all elder sisters. Her arrival at those houses where there happened to be many daughters (and alas! of such houses there were not a few), seldom failed to set the elements of strife at work. The elder girls scolded the younger; and the younger made smart answers to their elders—and betters—as the elders thought, and gave the younger to understand; but which the younger did not consider a point so clearly demonstrated as, for the peace and well-being of the family, might be wished.

Sometimes it chanced, that while the combatants, armed *cup-a-pee*, were dealing one another deadly blows, to decide to whom the prize should by right belong, the object of their contention, determining to belong to neither, took himself off. But even should the gentleman, thanks to his guardian angel, have sur-

mounted one danger, he was generally decoyed by Mrs. Flanagan into an ambuscade in another direction. If he had eluded the toils of Kitty Daly, "'tis a pity," she would say, "not to try and get him for Gratty O'Keefe"—and if by extraordinary good luck he escaped Gratty,—"why then in the name of goodness, let's see what can be done for poor little Morris." So that the miserable victim had to sing his death-song at last, with the best courage he could muster.

Notwithstanding Mrs. Flanagan's claims on the gratitude of the public (the female portion of it at least), she, like many other great benefactors of the human race, had laboured for a thankless and untoward generation. Those members of a family whom she had overlooked in her matrimonial arrangements, of course abused her—not within hearing though; for who dare openly arraign the awful Mrs. Flanagan."

The girl selected, if she chanced to fail, naturally laid her failure in her own mind, and in her confidential *epanchemens* to her

bosom friend, entirely at Mrs. Flanagan's door; whereas, if she succeeded, she was very apt to undervalue Mrs. Flanagan's assistance, and to attribute all the credit to her own charms.

Yet on the worthy lady went without troubling her head whether "people choose to backbite her or no." Did she thus act from pure love of doing good, or as her female friends asserted, was she less influenced by a desire to serve her own sex, than by a wish to "spite the other, under whose neglect she had so long smarted?" We confess ourselves at a loss to decide whether Mrs. Flanagan had or had not mixed motives for her conduct; but are inclined to believe that there existed an incentive stronger than either benevolence or resentment—a restless spirit seeking occupation.

Among the houses "of consequence" to which, as we have before stated, Bess Carroll had access, was Killybegs Castle.

Lord Killybegs was what is generally termed in modern phraseology, a bore; always the

first to arrive at a party, and the last to depart; and, when a young man, sure to ask a girl to dance while she was debating whether somebody she liked better might not be crossing the room for the very same purpose, or to take the vacant seat allotted in one's own mind for another. He had an inexhaustible collection of stories, *à propos* to everything and everybody, and anecdotes innumerable, to make people laugh.

Now, as we have before intimated, Bess Carroll possessed, in an eminent degree, the faculty of listening to old stories, and of laughing at stupid jokes.

Lord Killybegs had a great taste for plotting and planning; but he early discovered that, unless Bess Carroll were at his elbow, he never could plot or plan aright; she was the best of all schemers, and, as a keeper of secrets, unrivalled. To her he might unreservedly and fearlessly open his heart—complain of the wildness and extravagance of his sons—the ill-

temper and perverseness of his wife, or of his daughters—lament over the failure of some favorite project—or confide his suspicions or his enmities—certain, too, of obtaining from her advice and sympathy suited to the occasion; whereas, being totally unable to think without letting somebody know what he was thinking about, he would, but for this safety-valve, have been thrown upon the discretion and good nature of the first chance person he might meet. A visit from Bess Carroll was hailed with as much satisfaction by Lady Killybegs as by her lord; for she was able to affect in her ladyship's behalf, what her ladyship could not always affect in her own—the ball—the winter in London, or the summer at the fashionable watering-place of the day. And yet the lady of the castle was not jealous; Bess possessing a certain qualification absolutely indispensable to whatever women aims at being the friend of the wife, as well as the husband; for while the latter praised "Bess, as the pleasantest, best

humoured, most sensible creature in the world," the former could comfort herself that "poor, dear Bess was as ugly as sin."

When, in the course of time, Bess Carroll became Mrs. Flanagan, her position in the noble family of Killybegs was not prejudiced thereby; for, although, unable to be so frequent a visitor as formerly, she was, from that very circumstance, if possible, a more welcome one; and when subsequently restored to liberty by the marriage of her step-daughters, and the death of her husband, some new functions were superadded to those she heretofore exercised, to her right honourable friend's advantage and her own reputation.

The daughters had grown up; and the amiability, the beauty and accomplishments, and good fortunes of the young ladies must be descanted upon. Who was better qualified for this purpose than Mrs. Flanagan? The eldest son had attained the age for entering upon public life. Again, where was a more proper per-

son to be found than the friend of his boyhood, to say for him all that he could not so well say *propriâ persona:* assurances of regard and professions of opinion come so much better from a gentleman's partisan than from a gentleman himself, especially that partisan happening to be a lady—mistakes are so easily attributable to female blundering or inventing; and, at any rate, however high clamour may run, nobody can "call her out."

Mrs. Flanagan proved herself as clever at electioneering as she had done in every other department requiring wiliness and judgment. The Honourable Augustus Foster was returned as one of the representatives for his native county.

Now, it had long been a pet project of Lord Killybegs to marry this son to Miss Whaley; but before he committed himself by a direct notification of his wishes, he had begged Mrs. Flanagan—whose intimacy in the Ballymagawley family rendered her a very proper agent—to sound them on the subject.

Perhaps the only person in the world that Mrs. Flanagan could be said to *love*, was Clara Whaley; and her affection had begun when Clara was a child, with little chance of being so great a personage as at present, for she had, at that time, three brothers. Sympathy was soon established between her and Bess Carroll. She would not suffer any one to sing her to sleep but Bess; nor could any please her in a doll's frock, but Bess; nor read stories for her; nor choose the exact colour of a sash, or a pair of shoes, but Bess; and when she grew older, Bess would coax the governess to forgive lessons, or intercede with mamma, whose favourite she did not happen to be, to extend an indulgence, or overlook a fault. Clara Whaley had not forgotten the friend of her childhood; neither had her father, whose darling she had ever been, omitted any opportunity of evincing consideration for a person regarded by her; and greatly was Mrs. Flanagan flattered by their notice—far more than by that of the Fosters;

first, because Mr. Whaley was of a better family, independently of having, through his marriage, become the representative of the O'Hallorans, and "all the world over, it was known who and what were the O'Hallorans!" secondly, because she gave Mr. Whaley and his daughter credit for possessing as much sense as herself; so that, being fully adequate to the management of their own affairs, and requiring no assistance from her, their friendship was proved to be perfectly disinterested. But, although she talked more of Ballymagawley, she preferred visiting at Killybegs Castle; and this preference was not, perhaps, as inconsistent as it may appear at first sight, in one who so much liked to play a role as Mrs. Flanagan did, and whose comfort in any person's society so invariably proceeded in an inverse ratio to her respect and admiration.

Mrs. Flanagan had now been for some time anxiously expecting Mr. Whaley's return home, in order to broach the Killybegs alliance.

CHAPTER III.

MRS. FLANAGAN had left Mrs. Brown's drawing-room the preceding evening, in a very bad humour, on two accounts: she was exceedingly mortified that her friend Miss Whaley should have arrived in town, and not sent for her; and exceedingly indignant that Captain O'Connor should presume to admire Miss Dillon, when she chose that he should admire Miss Daly; and the good lady, considering this as a personal insult, and being little disposed to brook an insult tamely, was discussing with Kitty and Co., various schemes of revenge, when one of the young ladies, standing at the window, gave notice that a carriage-and-four had just stopped before the door.

"A carriage-and-four!" exclaimed Mrs. Flanagan. "Who can it be, Bidelia dear, at this hour of the morning? Oh, I'll tell you what! as sure as day, 'tis Mr. and Miss Whaley! I knew my darling girl would not pass me by without calling!" and away she bustled down stairs to receive her honoured visitors.

The party above could overhear the dialogue—Mrs. Flanagan's exclamations of joy and gratitude, and the low, melodious tones of Mr. Whaley's voice, assuring his kind friend that he could not possibly think of passing her residence, hurried as he was, without dropping in, for a moment at least, to say, "How do you do?"

Thereupon a rejoinder of thanks, most emphatically conveyed, and vehement expressions of regret and surprise at not seeing "dear Clara."

Mr. Whaley's reply, that his daughter had not yet arrived, was scarcely more mortifying to Mrs. Flanagan than to the young ladies

who had been for some time very desirous of an introduction to the heiress, and were just thinking that the present accidental meeting would afford an excellent opportunity; but as their wishes on this head were not unmingled with a certain trepidation, perhaps they were, upon second thoughts, as well pleased to find that the charming, urbane father was alone.

On entering the room, Mr. Whaley immediately evinced an *empressement*—gratifying in any one, but bewitching in a man of consequence—accompanying his notice of each by so friendly a pressure of the hand, so sweet a smile, that who could wonder Mr. Whaley was a most popular person.

Not content with being delighted to see those he knew, and asking after their respective fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, uncles, and cousins to the sixth generation, including all the families connected with them by marriage, he requested to be introduced to such of the young ladies as might have outgrown his

recollection, but whose acquaintance he still ventured to claim as an old friend. And here followed another list of inquiries concerning worthy fathers and excellent mothers.

Mr. Whaley had never been a candidate for the county ; his watchful, universal politeness was therefore the more remarkable and flattering. The motive assigned by him for declining invitations, frequently and pressingly tendered, was one which highly redounded to his honour —an unconquerable reluctance to be forced into an angry collision with any individual.

Mr. Whaley was still a handsome man—he had regular features, and a clear, penetrating eye ; but a physiognomist would have detected lines of deep thought, if not of deep suffering, on his countenance, an occasional restless glance, and knitting of the brows, which seemed at variance with the unruffled composure of his manners, the blandness of his smile, and the musical inflections of his voice, and a politeness equable and undeviating.

Mr. Whaley had not very robust health, and was believed to have suffered much from the loss of a wife to whom he had been deeply attached, and of several promising children; but, perhaps, the circumstance which had most preyed upon his spirits was the melancholy accident that befel his brother-in-law, Evan O'Halloran; and his regrets were the more affecting, inasmuch as by the death of this brother-in-law unmarried, he succeeded, in right of his wife, to the Ballymagawley estates.

Mr. Whaley having finished his round of civilities, and taken a seat, Mrs. Flanagan proceeded to dismiss her levee of girls. The gentlemen was, as a gentleman ought to be, unutterably shocked at the idea of disturbing so many ladies; and all the way down stairs (for he insisted upon accompanying them to the house-door), he was reiterating apologies and expressions of regard for themselves and their respective families; and when he made his final bow, with one more shake of the hand,

one more smile, he left upon the mind of each individual of the party, that the world did not contain another human being so kind and amiable as Mr. Whaley.

"My dear sir, why are you always giving yourself so much trouble?" said Mrs. Flanagan. "Pray sit down a minute, and let us have a bit of comfortable chat. And first, let me ask you where you left Clara—Miss Whaley, I ought to say; but somehow, I never can turn my tongue to call her anything but Clara, just as I used to do in old times."

"And that is precisely what she would wish, for she recollects 'old times' as well as you do. But you asked me where I had left her. Being about to anticipate, by some weeks, the time I had fixed for my return, I prevailed on her to remain with a friend in the neighbourhood of Dublin, until I should have set matters a little to rights at home. Remittances have been rather slack latterly, and I was therefore anxious to see what they are doing hereabouts;

but, as you may suppose, by no means desirous of having Clara as a companion, when engaged in that way. My beloved Clara ! You know what a hindrance she is to me on all these occasions: the cattle no sooner in pound than she comes running to me with some pitiable story or other ; and then the claims she makes out—this man married to a cousin of my foster-brother's wife ; another is son-in-law to her nurse's sister. 'Tis astonishing how easily she can be imposed upon!—and, at home or abroad, it is the same thing. Wherever we go, the scapegraces of every class and every nation, somehow or other, are sure to make her out, and she gives or lends to all who ask her. My poor Clara ! What is to become of her when left, as she must be one of these days, to her own guidance ?"

"You ought to marry her to some sensible man, my dear sir. By the way, did you happen to see Augustus Foster in the course of your travels ?"

"No : strange to say, I have scarcely more than seen him since he was a boy. I don't know him at all."

"I wish you did," rejoined Mrs. Flanagan, significantly.

Mr. Whaley smiled.

Thus encouraged, Bess proceeded to state the commission she had received from Lord Killybegs, concluding with these words—

"The Fosters, to be sure, are new people ; but the son is greatly thought of, as I hear, in parliament, and we know the property is good thirty thousand a-year."

Mr. Whaley was too much a man of the world to care whether a prosperous family were new or old. He had, therefore, been often extremely desirous of meeting Augustus Foster, whose political talents he knew to be so highly rated that he was likely, at no very distant period, to occupy an important station in life ; but as he lived almost exclusively among the high official and fashionable English, and Mr.

Whaley's acquaintances in London and elsewhere were principally confined to the best of his own country, they had not been hitherto thrown together. That maxim of the French writer is tolerably correct, which says—"Pour se voir dans le grand monde, il faut avoir non les memes amis ; mais les memes indifferens." He now, therefore, listened attentively, and with great secret satisfaction, to Lord Killybegs' overtures.

"I do not conceal from you my anxiety to have Clara suitably settled in life ; both from regard to her interest and happiness, I earnestly wish to see her possessed of other ties before the only one that now binds her to existence shall be broken—as broken it must be, in the course of nature, before very many years. Not but I know full well that, under any circumstances, whenever I die, my child will grieve—bitterly, sorely grieve ; still, if she had others to cling to, she would rally for their sakes, and be soothed by their affection ; she

could not, at any rate, be so very desolate as if I were to leave her unmarried — my poor Clara!" And Mr. Whaley paused awhile, overpowered by emotion.

"Unfortunately, however," he continued, "Clara is very disinclined to marry. None of her numerous suitors have hitherto been successful in inspiring her with any degree of interest; nor have they even been able to persuade her of their own sincerity—considering all such assurances addressed rather to the heiress than to the woman. It is odd how full of suspicion she is upon this point, and this point alone."

"That's just because no one came as yet that she cared to believe," rejoined Mrs. Flanagan.

"There is a good deal of truth in that observation. From what I have heard of Foster, I should be inclined to think him more likely to succeed with her than any former candidate for her regard, if she would but allow herself

time to become acquainted with him. My fear, however, is, that she will disconcert our scheme by her wilfulness; refuse to be introduced, perhaps ; or, if she should comply thus far, affront him, when she catches a glimpse of his intentions, by some manifestation of what she calls sincerity.

"That is the very thing I was thinking of, sir. He is expected at Killybegs Castle in the course of a few weeks, and we must cast a figure to bring about a meeting, as if by accident, you know ; afterwards, you can ask him to Ballymagawley, without letting her suspect what he goes for. Would not that be a good plan ?"

"Excellent !—but I rely upon you, my dear friend, to manage this impracticable girl with discretion. Do not say too much about Foster !"

"Leave me alone for that, sir; when a touch will do the business, I never give a pull ; the racer and the cart-horse mustn't be handled

the same way ! I won't talk to Clara Whaley as if she were Gratty O'Keefe—never fear !"

"By the way, is that the young lady that keeps O'Connor idling here, instead of attending to my business?" asked Mr. Whaley, with his usual smile, as he rose to take leave.

"Oh, the captain wouldn't condescend to look at her or any one, since Miss Dillon came."

"Miss Dillon !" repeated Mr. Whaley, reseating himself—"that must be some stranger, from the name."

"Yes—a girl that dropped out of the clouds here, about four or five months back, from some place abroad, with an old maid of an aunt that is by the way of being a great new light—and thinks the devil would have her if she touched a card, or went to a party ; but lets the niece spend all her time flirting and making a fool of herself—getting inside our own girls with the men, and keeping us all in hot water from morning till night."

Mr. Whaley having resumed his seat while

Mrs. Flanagan was speaking, now asked carelessly—"Did you chance to hear what brought them to this place?"

"The Lord knows!—whatever it is, they keep it to themselves; that's to say what really brought them."

"But have you not some idea of what induced them to come?"

"Oh, indeed, I could give a guess, I think," replied Mrs. Flanagan, smilingly, for she was not a little flattered by the interest with which her highly respected friend was listening.

"You could!" said Mr. Whaley, fixing his eye intently on his companion. "And pray, what might that guess be?"

"Something like what your own is, I dare say."

"Mine, Mrs. Flanagan!—why—what do you suppose I can possibly know about the matter?"

Mrs. Flanagan for the first time in her life thought Mr. Whaley's voice trash, and the expression of his countenance unpleasing;

aware that she had given offence, although unable to conjecture the cause, she hesitated to answer—still further perplexed and embarrassed by a consciousness that Mr. Whaley had been keeping his eye all the time earnestly bent upon her.

But Mrs. Flanagan was not a person to be very long put out by any thing; she soon, therefore, mustered courage to break the ominous silence—"Well, sir, shall I tell you my guess?"

"By all means—tell me your guess."

The cold stern tone in which the permission was conveyed, would have repelled the communicativeness of any one but Mrs. Flanagan—it would have checked Mrs. Flanagan herself, perhaps, had she not been about to launch forth upon her favorite topic—"It did sound quare, to be sure; but everybody was quare sometimes."

The lady's surmises with respect to Miss Dillon having been already intimated to the

reader, we shall not here repeat them. She concluded thus :—

" As for that story she tells about her father and brother, it does not hold water at all—'tis regular *ramash*, in my opinion."

" What about her father and brother ?" asked Mr. Whaley ; and the cloud which had begun to clear away, again darkened his features.

"Oh, the Lord knows—a bothered history as ever you heard—a father she never saw, and a brother she lost, I don't know how many years ago, that she insists upon it are to be found here—the father's family, that's to say—for he himself is in kingdom come this many a day ; but she will have it he belonged to this county, and was a person of consequence."

" What makes her suppose so?" rejoined Mr. Whaley.

" To tell you the truth, sir, and not to give you an uncivil answer, I let it all in at one ear, and out at the other."

" Oh, to be sure—to be sure ; but, I was

just curious to learn what she says for herself; and, by the way, did I understand you aright, that she was also looking for a brother here—what steps has she taken for that purpose?"

"She goes about the cabins, that's all, striving to make out some woman or other, who had stole him away. Oh, indeed, such a looking for a needle in a bundle of hay, as that, I never heard, long as I am in the world."

"She is handsome, it appears," observed Mr. Whaley, after a slight pause—"is she clever, sensible, do you think?"

"Humph! she plays and sings, and jabbers French and Italian, and all that sort of thing; but as for the *nous*, I can't say much—she has let a couple of good matches slip through her fingers already,—I know this very minute she could hook Frank O'Connor, if she had a mind, or knew how to set about it, as asy as I'd take a pinch of snuff. But whether she gets him or no, one thing I'm sure of, at any rate, Kitty wont, while she remains here."

Mr. Whaley so fully concurred with Mrs. Flanagan on this subject, as considerably to raise her in her own estimation ; while he so kindly bewailed that a girl, come from nobody knew where, for reasons nobody knew what—though everybody might guess, should have the power of frustrating well-laid plans, and long cherished hopes, as to elicit from her expressions of the warmest gratitude.

"But why do you not give O'Connor the benefit of your knowledge of the world?—why do you not advise him?"

"I did already, sir."

"Well, and what was his reply?"

"Short and sweet—that he didn't believe a word I said—there's impudence for you! Mr. Frank O'Connor, indeed, wouldn't believe what his betters believe!"

"He is a conceited, pompous fellow," said Mr. Whaley.

"He's a regular *omadhaun*—that's what he is ; now for nothing else, but to spite him, I would banish that girl!"

"And do you not think that you may be able to influence her departure, my dear friend?"

"I don't know—I'm afraid not—I can't put my finger on anything, do you see?—I may suspect as much as I please, but I can prove nothing—there's the misfortune of it! Don't you perceive the difficulty I am in, my dear sir?"

"I do." And Mr. Whaley mused awhile.

"There are occasions in life, my dear Mrs. Flanagan," he resumed, stopping in his quick walk up and down the room—"when, according to my opinion, we are not only justified, but compelled to act upon suspicion, for this reason, that there are occasions when proof is unattainable. Now let me ask you, what you would consider to be your duty, in the instance we are at present discussing, supposing that proof of your surmises have been obtained?—would it not be your duty to protect your young female acquaintances from improper companionship?

and I say *your* duty, thinking you more especially called upon to take an active part in such cases, from your position in society here, and the influence—the legitimate influence you exercise over it. Our good friends of this town are not sufficiently discriminating in their kindness and open-hearted hospitality. Such things, as I have known, occur in other places, where far more caution in receiving strangers was employed!—Shocking!"

Here Mr. Whaley proceeded to detail several anecdotes of rather a startling character, that had come to his own knowledge, illustrative of the foregoing observations, to each and all of which Mrs. Flanagan listened with an air of very considerable pleasure and edification, as might be inferred from the frequent pursing up of her mouth, and shaking of her head. Her whole demeanour, indeed, was indicative of virtuous horror and triumphant sagacity. For that worthy old lady having a way of her own in dealing with analogies and possibilities,

whereby she could at pleasure convert them into identical cases and absolute certainties, had so completely confounded the heroine of her own story with the various heroines of Mr. Whaley's, that she ended by glorying in the detection of each successive pretty culprit, as an exploit in which she had had a personal share, and for which she was entitled to a personal compliment; while by the same process, she easily contrived to make Rose Dillon accountable for all the impositions and delinquencies of all her cotemporaries and predecessors, who had ever presumed to stir from the spot where they had been born, and their fathers before them.

Mr. Whaley at length rose to take leave. Mrs. Flanagan, however, still retained in her grasp the hand extended to her.

"Do you know what I am thinking, my dear sir—that you could tell us something about this girl, if you liked ?"

Once more Mr. Whaley's eyes were bent on his companion, with a scrutinizing and some-

what displeased expression, which Mrs. Flanagan was too much pre-occupied to notice, and, consequently, proceeded quite at her ease.

"Do now, like a dear good man as you are—the best man in the world—tell me what it is; and I give you my oath I will never mention your name in the business, good or bad, as long as I live; you will see yourself I won't: do now! Sure I never told anything yet you bid me not—sure I didn't?"

Mr. Whaley's pale cheek glowed for a moment, and then grew paler than before.

"Get rid of her as fast as you can; but, remember, upon no account mention my name."

As he said these words, he hurried out of the room, and in a few moments afterwards was seated in his travelling chariot, on his way to Ballymagawley.

CHAPTER IV.

SELDOM has there been seen so beautiful an instance of devoted love between parent and child, as that which subsisted between Mr. Whaley and his daughter, blending so happily the instinct of nature with the freedom and the sympathies of a tie originating in choice; that each saw in the other the most valued friend and companion either possessed, as well as a tenderly beloved child, and highly honoured parent.

We have before intimated that Clara had ever been her father's darling. The boys were bold, frank, handsome creatures—praised and caressed by everybody; but no one, except Bess Carroll, praised and caressed the little

girl, and yet Mr. Whaley felt much drawn towards her. Perhaps because she *was* a little girl ; for, proud as a father may be of his sons, yet, anticipating a day of collision, as he naturally must do, between him and them, when the playful boys shall become determined men, pertinacious in opinions and in actions, he will instinctively turn to his girls, as those to whom he must hereafter look for compliance with his tastes and habits, for submission to his will or his wishes ; and, to sum up all in one word, to whom he can look for love.

Unaccustomed to notice, the child was proportionably grateful for it ; and the father soon began to reap a harvest—the precious harvest of tenderness and gratitude. Already he observed her dark, intellectual eyes fastened on him, with an expression of such intensity of affection as proved that she was cold only because others were cold to her, and not, as her mother asserted, because she was incapable of attachment.

Mrs. Whaley loved her boys best, perhaps for the same reason that Mr. Whaley loved his girl best, each following out, through their varied relations in life, the object which their different destinies induced them to seek: woman looking up to man, as the source of power; man beholding in woman the one green spot where his heart may repose when wearied of striving with his fellows.

Whether or not Mr. Whaley's preference for his daughter be referable to metaphysics or to accident, does not much signify; love her he did, and with a tenderness as deep as that of a mother. When, subsequently, his three sons were swept away in the course of one year, and their broken-hearted mother died of grief, it is not surprising that he should have clung to the only tie left to him with more than maternal—with idolatrous love.

Having early observed in her evidences of a more than ordinary intellect, he decided upon giving her such an education as should afford

ample scope to it; uniformly encouraging her to a free expression of opinion, and never, even in her childhood, exacting a servile submission to his will. He appealed to her reason or her affections; and to such appeals a mind and heart like Clara's could not be insensible. According as she progressed in years and ideas, the intercourse between father and daughter became gradually one of perfect intellectual equality; he claiming no other advantage than that arising from superior age and experience. These concessions, however, induced neither an encroaching nor a vain-glorious spirit. Her's was not a soul to bow down in worship before the image of self, and fancy it bedecked in every moral and mental perfection; for nothing short of perfection could satisfy her aspirations after what was great and good, because her father's lips so often assured her that she was superior to all the rest of her sex. If she did not fill up her own ideas of excellence, it mattered little to

her whether or not she might be considered superior to the generality of young ladies—the well-dressed, dancing, playing automata, that glide through life, and when no longer seen, are forgotten. Clara had all the simplicity which is allied to real greatness—all the humility that belongs to true ambition.

Her education, both that portion of it which is drawn from books, and that other still more important one that is linked with circumstances, had imparted a tone of feeling and of thinking very much out of the common bent of female minds. In her eager pursuit of information, she had even ventured feloniously to poach on the preserves of masculine knowledge; and could furnish a quotation from Greek philosopher or poet, or apply an illustration from science as happily and as readily as if she had been, during seven or eight years, flogged at Eton or Westminster, and had graduated in honours at Oxford or Cambridge.

In an age of social as well as political *movement*, the nature of Clara Whaley's attainments does not so much constitute the singularity of the case, which lies rather in this circumstance, that although able to do what we have stated, except in conversation with her father, she never did do so; for, on going into the world, she perceived, with the instinct of true superiority, how liable she was to be misunderstood, and to be set down as a *blue* wanting to show off; whereas she was conscious of possessing an indifference to social applause, that might have done honour to the most stoical of the ancient sages. She had thought as well as read; her understanding had been strengthened in proportion as her knowledge had increased; and thus trained by a manly hand, she had acquired a certain masculine independence of thinking, perhaps rather more than her father had originally contemplated—his aim having been merely to infuse as much of the moral and intellectual

qualities of his own sex as should give energy to her character, without impairing its feminine grace and pliability. Apprehensive lest her impetuous feelings, and generous, confiding temper, might hereafter render her the prey of some designing fortune-hunter, he had assiduously laboured to furnish her with weapons of defence against a wily assailant; not exactly anticipating that, while intending only to teach her how to use her own strength, he was awaking so democratic a spirit, as would very much disincline her to any domestic authority, except a father's. Possessing that station and influence in her own right, which other women are endeavouring to attain, through the mystic power of a few words and a slender rim of gold, she was by no means anxious to place herself and fortune at the disposal of any gentleman of her acquaintance, however she might otherwise wish to oblige him.

Mr. Whaley was disappointed. He ex-

pected his daughter would have made a sensation ; and so she might, had she turned her powerful intellect and varied accomplishments to the account that almost any other girl but herself would have done. Instead of a graceful, brilliant, winning coquette, concealing energy and judgment under the mask of intelligent playfulness, surrounded by glittering stars and dazzling coronets, Mr. Whaley beheld in his daughter, a thoughtful, candid, high-souled, enthusiastic woman, who, leaning on his arm, in devoted love and reverence, as they took their mountain ramble, would pour forth noble and generous feelings, in eloquent, forcible words, and never wish for any other auditor than her dear father.

And did Mr. Whaley love his child the less because he had failed in moulding her according to his own tastes and fancies ? Oh, no ! Man of the world though he was, he could not help admiring the lofty integrity of character which he foresaw would prove unswerving in

every emergency; her scorn of all disguise and subterfuge; her superiority to the various littlenesses and prejudices of her sex, while she retained all its refinement of feeling—all its devotedness of affection. But although assenting in words to his daughter's single-hearted views of duty, a penetrating observer might have detected in his hurried, yet smiling acquiescence, and skilful direction of the subject into some other channel of thought, indications that he occasionally laboured under a constraint in the society of his beloved and admired child, for which it was difficult to account, no man standing higher in public opinion, as a person of strict adherence to his word, and punctuality to the very letter of his engagement, than Mr. Whaley. He afforded, indeed, a remarkable example of steady principle and conciliatory manner, which could scarcely have failed to insure him equal respect and affection.

The only social relation in which an excep-

tion to the universal popularity he enjoyed could be found, was in that of landlord; and yet he was not harder than his neighbours, perhaps, and certainly far more courteous. He never raised his voice, nor swore at his tenants; and although he might find it inconvenient to satisfy their "expectations," his refusal was always graciously expressed, and almost always accompanied by a smile.

Men in the lower class of life are perhaps, as good physiognomists as animals or children; being led by the same sense of dependance to observe the involuntary indications of character in those superiors with whom they are connected. For this reason, the opinion of the Ballymagawley tenantry touching their master may not be altogether unworthy of notice.

"Mr. Whaley was a polite gintleman; there couldn't be found a palither, anywhere; but one's heart could never warm to him somehow—maybe 'twas because the words and the smiles didn't come from his heart—God be

with the one that is gone!—who could get into a passion, and rap out an oath now and then like a hearty, pleasant gintleman, as he was, and the next minute be as friendly as one's born mother!—God be with the man whose worst word and look was better than this one's best; for the heart—the heart was in the right place."

In justice, however, to Mr. Whaley, its hould be stated, that no one could have been brought into immediate contrast with Evan O'Halloran, and not have suffered more or less in the comparison; at least in the estimation of an Irish tenantry.

A grave, silent man, "who kept himsel' to himsel'," had but a poor chance against a dashing, off-handed fellow, who never kept anything to himself; and whose laughing familiarity, reckless temper, indiscriminating generosity, good humour, high spirit, so thoroughly qualified him to be a type of national character; and as such, to rally round him the sympa-

thies of the class that is national, par excellence.

Besides, Evan was the master in anticipation only, not in possession; he enjoyed, therefore, all the advantages of Irish proprietorship—its influence, and the power of attaching, without being called upon to exercise any of its duties or responsibilities.

The circumstances of his death were also calculated to produce a strong impression on the mind of the people. He had gone out in the morning, full of strength and beauty—for Evan was strikingly handsome—and brought home that night a corpse!—his fowling-piece had accidently gone off. "And he was the last of the O'Hallorans; the ould ancient family that they had lived under from father to son; and though Mr. Whaley's wife was an O'Halloran, an' own-sister to Misther Evan, God be merciful to him! still Misther Whaley wasn't an O'Halloran himsel'; and then, as he had only a daughter, she would be bringing some new

name a-top of 'em, one of these days; and so the O'Hallorans would be forgot intirely, as if they never were in it at all, so they would—wirra! more's the pity!"

But, whatever Mr. Whaley might have appeared to his tenants, to his daughter, as we have before intimated, he seemed perfection; and yet she observed with sorrow, that this most amiable being—the most beloved father—was not happy. She had often surprised him deep in thought—and evidently not of a pleasing kind; but he had replied to her words and looks of affectionate enquiry, by a silent caress merely; while at the same time, by engaging immediately afterwards in conversation with his accustomed ease, he appeared desirous of proving these occasional tokens of his saddened heart arose, not from the pressure of actual suffering, but from a pensiveness that would now and again revert to lost blessings, and that could always be won back to a cheerful enjoyment of life by the voice of his child,

reminding him of the blessing which he still possessed—not that he had expressly said so. He never, indeed, alluded by any chance to the friend of his early youth—seldom to the wife or children he had lost; but Clara was led to believe, from words he had sometimes dropped, that they occupied much of his thoughts when alone; and that were it not for the consolation he derived from her society and her affection, he should utterly sink under recollections of the past.

And she loved her father for this exquisite sensibility, as much as she honoured him for the firmness which restrained it within the bounds that a manly courage would prescribe for its indulgence, allowing it no further influence over him than served to soften down a grave temper and steady adherence to duty, which might otherwise have assumed a character of sternness; and but for it too, his accurate knowledge of the world might have induced an acrid, selfish, doubting spirit.

But from whence could such a union of the amiable and the excellent be found, as in her father?

So Clara said, and so she thought; and who would wish a daughter to say or to think otherwise?

CHAPTER V.

FOR some time after Mr. Whaley's departure, Mrs. Flanagan's cogitations, if capable of being discerned by mortal eye, would have presented a strange assemblage of ill-assorted images and contradictory feelings, over which triumph at her own sagacity reigned supreme; "for had not Mr. Whaley as good as said that all she suspected was true,—the dear, kind man, that would not hurt a fly."

At one time, the flirting Kitty, ready to say "yes" to the first man who might ask her, would come whisking through Mrs. Flanagan's brain, in company with the perverse heiress, equally ready to say "no" to any man who should ask her; and then the cunning Miss Dillon would

come gliding in with her hypocritical blush; and simultaneously with these female forms, two of manly mould would start up; the tall, consequential Captain O'Connor, absolutely elbowing the diplomatic Mr. Foster, as each pushed onward to attain the fair beings whose face or whose fortune lured him to her side. And, according as these images arose, corresponding sentiments of good nature, malevolence, affection, and indignation were called forth in such quick succession, that they might seem almost to arrive in company. But her thoughts soon began to arrange themselves in order; and suspending for the present all consideration respecting the method to be pursued in order to induce Miss Whaley to smile upon Mr. Foster, the parties not having yet met, nor likely to do so for some time, she wisely decided on confining her attention to the subject more immediately requiring prompt measures.

Mrs. Flanagan's animosity to Rose Dillon

owed its origin partly to her friendship for Kitty Daly, partly to the uneasiness she seldom failed to experience in the society of those possessing more refinement than herself; for, although, in persons of superior station, she might look upon it as an appendage to fortune, as suitable as any other article of luxury, and equally beyond her attainment; yet for people of no more consequence than she was, to "set up" to be better educated, and better mannered, was a mortification to her pride, and, as such, an unpardonable offence.

Then again, she was not sorry to have an opportunity to vex Frank O'Connor, independent of her anxiety to serve Kitty Daly, having long borne him a secret grudge, as almost the only individual in the town who even ventured to contradict, or in any manner to annoy her.

Furthermore, she was incited to take the part suggested by Mr. Whaley (good, sensible Mr. Whaley, whose compliment upon her sense and her influence were still resounding most

pleasingly in her ears), by her ambitious desire of proving that she could, whenever she chose, make her opinion the opinion of the town.

And now, having settled in her own mind what ought to be done with Rose Dillon, she sallied forth to give all her acquaintances the benefit of her suspicions, or discoveries, as she called, and perhaps, considered them; for a prejudiced person—a woman more especially—does occasionally experience a difficulty in ascertaining the limits between what he or she and another may suspect, and what neither of them have discovered.

But before Mrs. Flanagan set regularly to business, she first dropped in for half-an-hour, according to daily custom, on her hostess of the preceding evening. For Mrs. Brown, not having daughters or nieces of her own "to be putting-in for," when Mrs. Flanagan might think proper to overlook them a while, and direct her efforts elsewhere, had been made a confidante of all her schemes regarding the

daughters and nieces of other people, besides being entrusted with whatever disappointments or mortifications might chance to befall her. It was more sociable than talking to one'sself, and quite as safe; for Mrs. Brown invariably forgot what one visitor had said by the time another had come in; and full as satisfactory to a person like Mrs. Flanagan, who could not bear to be contradicted, nor even to be questioned—Mrs. Brown seldom had curiosity enough to question, and never energy sufficient to contradict. Mrs. Brown was, therefore, pronounced by Mrs. Flanagan to be "the pleasantest woman she knew anywhere," and a person that "she could not at all do without."

"Well, my dear, things are come to a pretty pass," observed Mrs. Flanagan, as she dropped quietly into a comfortable elbow-chair.

"'Deed the world is turned topsy-turvy, I believe, Mrs. Flanagan."

"Oh, 'tisn't that I mean. The world is the

way it always was ; neither better nor worse ; 'tis turned the way it was when we were born, and it will be turned the same way when we are dead. No, but things must be come to a pretty pass when I am to be defied and made a liar of by Frank Connor ; for he has no more right to the O'—between you, and me, and the post—than you have ; and he had better go easy, I can tell him, or he may be apt to hear more of my mind than he bargains for. His sister wouldn't be at Swinesfort to-day but for me ; and see the return he makes !"

"The world knows she owes that match to you, Mrs. Flanagan ; and so she always says, indeed."

"Not at all, Mrs. Brown, my dear ; you forget—she says quite the contrary, that she has nobody to thank but herself. But, indeed, I wish that was all I had to trouble me ! People may be obleedged to me or no, just as they please ; I can live mighty well without

them or their thanks. But there's one thing I can't live without, and won't live without, and that is respect and civility. Respect and civility, Mrs. Brown, I have been used to all my life, and I won't permit man or woman to treat me with anything else; so let nobody attempt it! To think of Frank Connor having the assurance to tell me last night he didn't believe a word I said!"

"Last night! Is it in my house?" exclaimed Mrs. Brown, suspending her knitting for a second.

"Yes, indeed; in your house. But the best of it is, that every syllable I hinted about Miss Dillon turns out to be true. You remember what that was—don't you?"

"Indeed I can't say I do, my dear."

"Is it possible you have forgot already what we were talking about last night? Why your memory must be gone entirely, my dear woman! Well, the upshot of it is, if she had all the brass in Europe, she couldn't remain an

hour longer in this town after what I know of her!"

"The Lord save us! and what do you know of her, Mrs. Flanagan?"

"Everything that's bad."

"And how was it you found all this out, my dear?"

"Oh, never mind how I found it out. What does it signify how a thing is found out, so it *is* found out?"

"Well, well, who would ever have thought it—such a mild, quiet creature!"

"'Tisn't every one would have thought it, Mrs. Brown; but I thought it long ago: the first minute I laid eyes on her, I guessed what she was. The blush-rose, indeed! She had good right to blush, if they knew but all! But whatever I might think in my own mind, I never would have breathed a word against her, if she hadn't gone and interfered with our own girls. There was Kitty Daly and Frank O'Connor getting on as well as heart could

wish, till she came in it. But for this confounded girl, Kitty would have nabbed him, as sure as I'm sitting here."

"Ah, Mrs. Flanagan, my dear, it would be mighty hard to nab Frank O'Connor—such a solid young man!"

"No matter; Kitty would have done it, if he was twice as solid: she is able for him, and any two of his sort—there isn't a smarter girl anywhere. Even left to herself, she would be a match for Frank any day in the year; and, of course, with my helping there could be no doubt at all. Now, Mrs. Brown, I should be sorry to lean on a person when they wouldn't deserve it, so I don't say Miss Dillon was in fault because Gratty O'Keefe and Mary Morris did not get married to the –5th, though they lay the blame on her, but that's all nonsense, as I told them. They didn't do a bit better with any regiment these seven years back, than they done with the last. All I complain of is, that she circumvented Kitty with Frank

O'Connor, or strove to do so ; for all is not lost that's in danger, and I'll win him back yet, please God, and no thanks to her."

Mrs. Flanagan next proceeded to Mrs. Quin's, but that lady, having no daughters, was taking the matter easy enough, until her visitor threw in a few hints about her son, Peter, and the awful possibility there existed of his being inveigled into a marriage with this artful girl.

In the midst of the conversation, Peter himself entered the room.

"Did you hear the news, my honey ?" his mother asked.

"What news ?"

"About Miss Dillon."

"Going to be married, I hope," Peter rejoined.

"Married ! Oh, indeed, any one that likes it may marry her, I believe."

"May they ? When did she tell you so, may I ask ?"

"Oh, Peter—Peter, dear! this is a dreadful world!"

"'Tis, faith, the devil's own world, for them that have nothing in it."

"What does that signify compared with the wickedness of it? Oh, the wickedness—the wickedness of it, Peter, is enough to make one's hair to stand on end."

"Why what has come over it to-day particularly, of all days in the year?"

Here Mrs. Quin related to her son all that Mrs. Flanagan had related to her, and Mrs. Flanagan had related to Mrs. Quin all that Mr. Whaley had related to herself, giving, of course, a properly distorted version of the whole.

But Peter, guessing the quarter whence the intelligence had emanated, would not gratify Mrs. Flanagan even so far as to exclaim at it, or undertake a serious refutation of the charges; but listened throughout with an air of contemptuous incredulity, which might have

provoked a much less easily provoked person than our good friend Bess.

"Well, of all the stuff I ever heard in my life that is the greatest; and 'tis such a stupid farrago one can't laugh at it even. In the name of goodness, mother, who was the dunderheaded idiot that told it to you?"

"I request, Mr. Quin," said Mrs. Flanagan, unable any longer to restrain her indignation, "that you will not presume to apply such epithets to me, or to anything I assert. I never assert out of book, sir, and I have authority —the very best authority for what I say."

"Have you, indeed? Oh, that alters the case entirely. May I ask who was your informant?"

"I'm not at liberty, sir, to give the name."

"Oh, an authority that can't be given."

"It can be given," Mrs. Flanagan interrupted; "but I don't chose to give it."

"Oh, very well; but you are aware that an authority that can't or won't be given,

amounts to no authority at all, my dear ma'am."

Never had Mrs. Flanagan's discretion been more severely tried than on the present occasion. She could at once have stopped Peter Harry Joe's impertinent doubts and questions, by naming Mr. Whaley, whose parting words conveyed a meaning too clear to be misunderstood; but how could she do this in defiance of his prohibition, and of her own promise?

Poor Mrs. Flanagan was therefore obliged to remain silent, under Peter's galling insinuations.

"If there be an angel in this world, 'tis Miss Dillon," continued Peter Harry Joe; and I wouldn't believe anything against her from the Pope himself. By heaven! I'd stand a shot for one of her smiles—just one smile of goodwill."

The ladies exchanged significant glances, which, being as well understood by Peter

as by one another, he was induced to continue—

"That's the girl who never thought the less of me because I happened to be only *poor* Peter Harry Joe, but would be as glad to see me as she would Frank O'Connor, every bit. Faith, I have a mind not to court any longer for him, but try what I can do on my own account."

"Oh, Peter, is it you?" cried his mother; "a lad that has nothing!"

"Do you call my wits nothing?"

"I don't know much your wits done for you, up to this time, Peter, honey."

"Because I never tried to do anything with them; but if they were to get me the prettiest girl in the county, would not that be doing something with them?"

"And has she any money at all?" inquired Mrs. Quin, with a look of anxiety.

"All the better for me if she hasn't; I should have no chance else, I am afraid."

And thus Peter rattled on, mischievously enjoying his mother's evident alarm, but not sufficiently considering that he was at the same time playing Mrs. Flanagan's game.

Peter having scampered off on some hair-brain scheme or other, Mrs. Flanagan remained a while longer, to condole with Mrs. Quin on the prospect of an immediate match between Miss Dillon and her son ; he, and not the cautious Frank O'Connor, being likely to prove the victim of her beauties and deluderies ; and then she betook herself to Mrs. O'Keefe's.

But Mrs. Flanagan, in the eagerness of talking, having chanced to drop certain words, indicative of her designs upon Frank O'Connor, being in favour of Kitty Daly rather than of Gratty O'Keefe, Mrs. O'Keefe was of opinion "that nobody should be condemned unheard ; every one had enemies ; and for her part she always believed the best of her neighbours, as she wished her neighbours might do of her ; and at any rate that it was hard to know what

could have been found out for certain since the night before."

"Very well, my dear woman; believe it or no, just as you please; but one thing I can tell you—and mind what I say—you may put out of your head all notions of marrying Gratty, while ever this girl stays here."

"Oh, Gratty, indeed! She's not the only one in the world that comes between poor Gratty and whatever luck God might send her."

"If it's hinting at Kitty Daly you are, remember whose fault it is that Gratty hasn't a good house of her own to-day; but all I could say you wouldn't follow my advice; and now you see what has come of it. Long and long ago, you know, I laid out Frank O'Connor for your daughter; but he was only a poor half-pay, you said, and Gratty could get that any day; and you began ripping up stories of his father, and his grandfather; who were they, and what were they. Well, you turned up

your nose at him then, Mrs. O'Keefe, and you can't blame him if he turns up his nose at you now. That time your poor husband was alive, and a great favourite at Ballymagawley, and Frank was in hopes of getting into the agency through his means; but when your good man died, and he got what he wanted by his own cleverness, or good luck, you couldn't expect he'd forget how little you thought of him once. I always knew that Frank was a steady-going fellow, that would do more good for himself than them who might be brighter, and you may remember I told you so. Then to be sure when he turned out a great man upon our hands, you and Gratty were after him every hour and minute of the day; and when you got nothing for your pains, and Peter Harry Joe made verses upon it all, you got into a passion, and Gratty began to cry; and both of ye laid the blame on me for advising ye to try for Frank O'Connor, and get ye laughed at! That just shows what it is to

deal with foolish people, who won't take your advice in proper time—or take half, maybe, and leave the half of most consequence; and then, when they have botched the business, by not doing entirely as you bid them, and at the minute you bid them, turn round and say, 'tis you spoilt it all! If I was not a woman in a thousand, Mrs. O'Keefe, I would have washed my hands out of Gratty, when ye behaved so ungrateful; but still I went on befriending her, up to this very minute. There she is! ask herself if I have not locked her out, and locked her in, made parties, laid schemes—and all to no good! Wouldn't a girl like that vex a saint? If I was to put my eyes upon sticks, I could do no more than I have done for her; and I must only see will I have better luck with another, not that I am forgetting her; and that's the reason I want to get rid of Miss Dillon." And leaving Mrs. O'Keefe to ponder on what had been said, Mrs. Flanagan dropped in at her friend, Mrs. Daly's. Here the news

was considered too good *not* to be true, and the ladies all agreed that Captain O'Connor's departure that morning for Ballymagawley, was quite a providential circumstance, affording them, as it did, such ample opportunity to conduct their operations unmolested.

For many days, Mrs. Flanagan was thus employed walking and talking from morning till night. But, although success at length crowned her efforts, she had found all her ingenuity necessary in order to blind the discernment, and counteract the proverbial good-nature and hospitality of the people of ——. However, as there happened to be few houses without a son who might be charmed, or a daughter to be annoyed, by the stranger's seducing ways, kindness and intelligence were for awhile lulled into acquiescence in Mrs. Flanagan's views.

At a meeting of certain influential ladies, a resolution was proposed and carried *nem. con.*, that Miss Dillon be forthwith excluded from all balls and tea-parties; and when accidentally

encountered, be passed as a person unworthy of notice. A resolution of thanks to Mrs. Flanagan, for her public spirited conduct on the occasion, was also proposed and carried unanimously.

CHAPTER VI.

In order that the reader may be enabled, amidst the conflicting opinions of the ladies and gentlemen of Miss Dillon's acquaintance, to exercise his own judgment, we would invite him to accompany us to her residence.

We enter the grass-grown court of a large building, sufficiently old and gloomy-looking to have realized the customary notion of a nunnery, were it not for its utter defiance of all rule and method. Here were windows of various sizes and various forms—broad, narrow, high, low—in some places confusedly huddled together; in others, the walls presented a bare, eyeless surface; and here were chimneys perched one over the other, some leaning this

way, some that way; and a roof of various heights, and shapes, and dates: so that it had altogether a most unconventual, rambling appearance.

The entrance to the interior stands open. We ascend a staircase which conducts us to the top of the house; and then we descend nearly to the point whence we scrambled up. We mount a narrow flight of steps on the right hand, and follow a long, dark passage, at the end of which we shall find a staircase on either side, the right leading upwards, the left downwards, the latter of which we shall take; and, opening a door opposite, we enter a small, ill-lighted apartment, which, but for the order and refinement observable in its arrangements, would seem cheerless, nay, almost mean.

Two ladies are sitting at work, one of whom is young, and so pretty, that it would be quite out of the question to expect that any individual of her own sex, however good-natured in general, could avoid being somewhat prejudiced

against her; and equally impossible for any individual of the other sex, however ill-natured in general, not to be as strongly prepossessed for her. Her dress (an important item always in the catalogue of female merits or graces, and which, serving, as it so frequently does, as an index to their minds, is so far indeed very important) is characterised by extreme simplicity and scrupulous neatness: no odds and ends; a scrap here and a scrap there, to give a becoming touch. However, this absence of fashionable nothings harmonizes so perfectly with the gentle, yet dignified cast of her beauty, that one might be tempted to suppose it dictated by coquetry, could such a conjecture be reconciled with the artless sweetness and the candour impressed on her countenance. The morning, rather than the evening, costume, marking, in our opinion, the tastes and habits of the wearer, we have been thus particular in drawing attention to the young lady, as not being one of those who wear, when nobody is

likely to see them, the faded finery not any longer produceable on state occasions.

Her companion has something in her face which pleads strongly in favour of the possibility that kindliness and contentment may be found in a middle-aged single lady. She had, even in youth, probably been handsome; but the happiness that reposes in her deep-set, intelligent eyes, indicating peace within—that peace which none can understand but those who have experienced it—speak better things to the heart than could beauty, even in her most triumphant hour. But when lighted up, as those eyes sometimes are, by joy—that joy which nothing earthly can give, and nothing earthly can take away—one might gaze with reverence on the sublime hope and Christian love that beam there.

Appearances are, however, proverbially deceitful. The young lady may be artful and coquettish; the elder one, cross and discontented, cold-hearted and narrow-minded, as

those necessarily must be, we are sometimes told, whose temper has not been sweetened by having a husband to humour, and children to watch over, and whose thoughts and affections have not been confined to selfish interests, or frittered away upon silly amusements.

In this dilemma we would suggest to the reader—whom we have brought hither for the express purpose of ascertaining Miss Dillon's real character—to do what he never probably has done before, and never may do again, viz., play the eavesdropper—listen to the conversation between her and her aunt, and, according to the intelligence he may glean from their confidential chit-chat, absolve or condemn her.

"Do, pray, oblige me, Rose; put on your bonnet—it is a thousand pities not to take advantage of the fine day."

But the young lady shook her head, in evident disapprobation of the suggestion, and remained silent.

"My dear child, you surely do not intend

to make a prisoner of yourself, and injure health of mind and body, because certain acquaintances, whom you never cared much about, have deemed fit to cut you? Conscious, as you must be of having done nothing to deserve such rude treatment, I am surprised you allow it to make any impression whatever on your mind. What could they have heard —what could they even have imagined against you? Come, do as I request!"

"Indeed, dear aunt, I cannot. I require some time to be able to despise people as I ought."

"Or rather as you ought not," rejoined Miss Fennell, with a smile.

"Perhaps so; but unfortunately I can never pardon an insult till I have brought myself to look with contempt upon the person who has offered it."

"I understand, Rose; yours would be that sort of forgiveness which costs only the sacrifice of some temper, and of no pride."

"And yet I was never less disposed to think highly of myself than at this moment, being fully sensible that whatever annoyances and mortifications I endure are but the just reward of my own folly and wilfulness. How bitterly I regret having urged you to come here!"

"And yet, perhaps, it is as well we did so; for your thoughts having once taken this direction, you would have been unsettled and dissatisfied elsewhere. Elate, hopeful, as we all are, until the stern or the tame realities of experience have taught us how little we can depend upon the creations of fancy—and truly creations of fancy are the expectations of youth—you might have acquiesced in my sober reasoning, but I doubt much that it would have convinced you."

"And thus, to gratify me, you exchanged substantial good for an air-bubble; friends who valued you for acquaintances who insult us; the lovely, abundant south, where our

limited income amply supplied all the comforts and many of the luxuries of life, for a spot where the sun, like an eastern despot, only comes forth now and then, as it were, on some grand gala day, and where we have barely sufficient for the necessaries of existence. If you would but scold me, aunt, I might be stimulated, perhaps, to seek some excuse for myself."

"In my opinion, you do not stand in need of any. The feelings that urged you to come here, were not only natural, but laudable. All I regret is, that you should have been so sanguine of success, for your own sake."

"I was, indeed, sanguine! At a distance, every thing seemed so bright and full of hope; and as I arranged events, circumstances so naturally followed one another, until at last, step by step, I attained my object—discovered my father's family; was welcomed by kind uncles, aunts—none I loved so well as you, though," she added, smiling—"by cousins in-

numerable, and, to crown my happiness, my brother was restored to me. Oh, how often have I sat, during hours together, my eye, perhaps, resting on the distant Pyrenees—because the eye will wander in quest of some object to rest upon—but seeing nothing of their glorious beauty, for my heart was in the little English village, where that brother had been lost; and I traced his course to this or that country, through all the varied scenes of life; talking with him, loving him—for he stood before my fancy a creature to be loved—bright, beautiful in mind and form! Sometimes, when in a pensive mood, my thoughts would turn from him to the widowed mother, who had sank under his loss; and I would try to recall some impression of her features, but in vain—they had altogether faded from my memory. At other times, my thoughts turned towards my father, who had not lived to see me, and of whom I knew nothing but the name: a few letters, the only relics of him,

I possessed ; but these letters were so full of affection to the wife he addressed, and to their infant boy, that my heart yearned towards him, and I longed to trace out his family, and hear who he was, and how he had met my mother, and what could have been the object of concealing the marriage from you—her only sister—leaving you, for years, altogether ignorant of her fate. In fact, from beginning to end, a strange mystery hung around the whole business, that I was most anxious to penetrate. When and where I lost my father, and how it came that his widow was left to die among strangers ; all this, and much more, I desired to learn, and was quite certain I should learn, if I could but persuade you to afford me the opportunity, by coming to this country. Here, accordingly, we have come ; but instead of a fairy land, abounding in adventure, everything and everybody, some way or other, connected with my fate, I cannot find even that any persons of my name reside

here ; and of Pegsheen Sullivan I can learn nothing."

"After all, you had but scanty data to proceed upon," said Miss Fennell ; "the postmarks on the letters being the only indication that your father lived in this neighbourhood ; for they contain none of those allusions to relatives or friends that one would naturally expect to meet in communications from home. Besides, your little portion being placed in the funds, beyond reach of a lawsuit," she added, smiling, "has always inclined me, as you are aware, to believe your father was not Irish. Again, with regard to that girl, who disappeared at the same time as our poor boy, we know nothing except the name, and that she was said to belong to this country ; but as I do not agree in the opinion of your mother's servant, that she enticed him away, such a supposition is, I think, quite inconsistent with Betsy's own account of her passionate love for him ; and, to me, therefore, it appears unlikely

that one child should have been more successful than the other in effecting its escape home."

"I am sensible of the full force of these objections now," Rose observed, with a sigh; "and perceive, as clearly as any one can, how absurd I have been. But if you knew how I have clung to this fancy—how it has occupied my dreams, and coloured my waking thoughts—I am sure you would pity the disappointment I must experience at seeing my airy castles vanish away, like the magic architecture we read of in some fairy tale, when suddenly the beholder finds himself in the midst of a weary waste—rendered doubly wearisome to him from contrast with the images of beauty that fill his mind. Life will seem to me henceforward very dull, very vapid—having nothing to interest—nothing to think about!"

"Nothing to interest!—nothing to think about!" Miss Fennell repeated. "Ah, Rose, do you, indeed, say so? But why should I

wonder? There was a time when I, too, in order to be roused to exertion, required the stimulus of a mental dream—for such it is, and as injurious, perhaps, to the moral system, as an actual dream is to the material one. And my hands might have dropped listlessly at my side, as I plodded along the obscure and lonely path marked out for me—no bright object in the distance presenting itself to lure me on—had I not caught glimpses of a brightness and a glory that can never belong to the glowing, yet delusive splendour of man's earth-born imaginings. Rose, when once you have soared in spirit into that world, you will no longer complain of having nothing to interest—nothing to think about. You will then possess stirring interests—absorbing subjects of thought."

"But might not a better motive than mere curiosity, or want of excitement, have prompted anxiety for a brother's fate?" rejoined Rose, in rather a hurt tone.

"Surely, dear love; but instead of an eager,

restless anxiety—a running hither and thither in mind—a looking to this and that channel of hope—I wish you could steady your thoughts by this simple consideration—that the very arrangement of circumstances least likely, according to human calculation, to bring about a certain result, may be precisely the one selected by Infinite Wisdom, as best suited to the purpose. If it be His will to grant this desire of your heart, He will never lack a way; let us, therefore, leave the how and the when to Him!"

"And so I try to do; but unfortunately my mind, if not all sunshine, is all gloom. Either I am certain of meeting this dear brother, and, as I said before, meeting in him all I could wish or imagine; or else I feel such painful misgivings as to the probable fate of a creature abandoned from infancy to a career of want and ignorance, perhaps, that I do at times actually shudder at the idea of finding, in this very brother, for whose restoration I have so often prayed

and longed, some man of hardened mind, and revolting habits! What can we expect? He had nobody to watch over, or care for him."

"Yes, Rose, he had. The One that never slumbers nor sleeps—the all-wise, all-powerful, all-merciful One! With Him on our side, who or what could be against us?—and without Him, of what avail were human efforts, however apparently well and perseveringly directed? There was a time when my heart used to die within me, as year after year passed away, and brought me no tidings of a dear and only sister. I called to mind her beauty—her simple, confiding nature—her unprotected situation; and I feared—oh! words cannot tell how I feared for her! Yet did I not afterwards find, that my apprehensions had been groundless, when Providence, in His own way, and in His own time, revealed the truth. For how little could I have imagined that the young widow, who, from grief at the loss of her child, had just breathed her last, and whose little orphan girl

I pitied, and came to soothe and fondle, should prove to be the sister I had so long sought in vain? That emaciated form—those worn features—how should I have recognized my once blooming Charlotte by them, had I not been enabled, by what the world calls chance, to discover it? A Bible lay by the death-bed—I took it up. There has always been, to my mind, something peculiarly impressive in *that* Book, when viewed in connexion with the creature who has just paid the penalty—the tremendous penalty—attached to the first transgression! In that ghastly spectacle, you behold the import and the fulfilment of those awful words—'Thou shalt die!' The Bible of the dead!—who can look upon it unmoved? Its pages marked by a hand now stiff and cold—those pages that aroused, when careless—consoled, when afflicted—sustained, when weak—the living actor and the living sufferer—and upon which he reposed secure, in the sure and certain hope of a joyful resurrection, when about to be

launched upon the ocean of eternity! The deep, solemn, mysterious meaning each word carries with it—as if whispered into the ear by that liberated spirit—that there is a reality, in both the promises and threatenings of that Book—a happy, or a miserable reality! With these feelings, as I have before mentioned, I took up the Book, little anticipating that it would prove to be my own gift, not many years previously, to my then happy, thoughtless, beautiful sister. Ah! Rose, I should have sank under the agony of that moment, had it not been for my conviction that all was well with her at last. The ring on her finger—the Bible by her side—told me that, as a sister, I need not blush for her—that, in every sense, all had been well—well, as to this world—well as to the next: and I was confirmed in this supposition afterwards, by the clergyman's report of her last moments. She had died happy, and had requested him to write to me, and say she committed to my care her child—her only one

—imploring me not to judge hardly of her, and that, when we met in the other world, all would be explained, and forgiven, she trusted. That she had written twice, some years before, without receiving an answer. Ah! my Rose, these letters I never received. And that she was about to make another attempt, when her death-sickness overtook, and carried her off. On that day you and I first became acquainted, Rose.

"Ay, indeed!—how providential that was! —I take shame to myself for my unthankfulness, when I recollect what her fate had been, and yours. Born to the expectation of wealth, and yet she was obliged to turn her accomplishments into the means of bread; while you were immured, during the best years of your life, in a sick room, attending upon a peevish invalid."

"The families of English merchants ought to be prepared for such vicissitudes.—We were not, and the blow therefore fell the more

heavily upon us.—With respect to my own lot, however, my poor old relation made ample amends for her occasional impatience, by bequeathing me sufficient provision for all reasonable wants. How singular that her death, leaving me at liberty, and with means to form some new plan of life, should have occasioned my return from abroad, just in time to see my poor sister laid in the grave, and to receive her orphan child into my arms—and heart, I think I may add," said Miss Fennell, as with glistening eyes, she kissed her niece's fair forehead.

CHAPTER VII.

THE same group of ladies, whose introduction to the reader formed our opening chapter, are again assembled; not, however, on this occasion at Mrs. Brown's, but at Mrs. Daly's hospitable residence.

The mounds of cakes, barnbracks, sallelons, and piles of bread and butter cut as thin as wafers—the dozens of cups and saucers—the lights on either side of the music-book, on the piano—the lights on the mantel-piece—the lights on the card-tables—the display of white satin shoes, and of shoulders as white and as soft as the satin of the said shoes—the roses in the hair, and the eyes, and the cheeks, as bright and glowing as the roses—all betoken

preparations for a regular "let out." As yet, however, only the female portion of the company had arrived—for as Kitty had observed, her father, and her father's old cronies did not count as men at all, and only served to take up the room of those who did.

The seniors have been discoursing for some time on the price of meat, and of butter, and the rise in groceries—the peccadilloes of servants, and so forth. Now these topics are but of an agitating nature. Why do the countenances of these ladies wear so anxious an expression?—And why do the juniors converse so eagerly in whispers, running every now and again to the open window, to take a peep into the street?

"What can be keeping the gentlemen, I wonder!" exclaimed Mrs. Daly.

But before any one had time to put in a rejoinder, there came a loud rap at the hall-door.

"Here they are!" observed the old ladies, and they folded their arms, and looked dignified.

"Here they are!" cried the young ladies, and they arranged their curls and their tuckers, and settled themselves—in a word, assumed that manner, and that expression of countenance which most people have observed, but which few, if any, can define—that peculiar expression, indicative, in the female sex, of preparations for the proper receiving of visitors of the masculine gender.

The door opened—and Pat, the man of all work, but called, *par excellence*, the butler, appeared, not ushering in a gentleman, but carrying a note.

"An apology, I declare!—and a double knock too—so he must have brought it himself, whoever he was! Pat, who was it?" asked Miss Daly.

"Mr. Quin, Miss," replied Pat.

"Pooh! Mr. Quin, indeed!" repeated Mrs. Daly, contemptuously, and she chucked Peter Harry Joe's missive, upon the concocting of which he had bestowed particular pains, without reading it, into the fire.

Once again the knocker was assailed—once again expectation was on tip-toe—once again was it doomed to disappointment, for once again did Pat make his appearance, the bearer of a note.

"Oh, my goodness! I wonder who this is from!—Pat, who was that?" asked his young mistress.

"Captain O'Connor, Miss."

"Well—I hope he has taken time enough, at any rate, to make up his mind whether he'd come or no!" observed Kitty, indignantly, in an aside to Gratty.—"'Pon my honor, 'tis too bad, to keep us all this while on tenter-hooks, expecting him!—'Twas Peter Harry Joe put him up to that, you may be sure—he is so horrid spiteful!"

Mrs. Daly condescended to read the captain's apology, and after she had read it herself, to read it for the benefit of the company.—A composition thus favoured, is surely worthy of being preserved and recorded for the benefit of the reader. It ran thus:—

"Captain O'Connor, –9th regiment (unattached), presents his compliments to Mrs. Daly, and regrets exceedingly, that circumstances of a more than ordinary nature, involving his feelings as an officer and a gentleman, will prevent his having the honour of waiting on Mrs. Daly this evening. Captain O'C. did not send an apology till the last moment, trusting that Mrs. Daly might have adopted such a line of conduct as would have allowed Captain O'C., consistently with his ideas of propriety, to have accepted Mrs. Daly's very obliging invitation."

"There's impudence for you!" exclaimed Mrs. Daly, as she flung down the note.—"Set a beggar on horseback, and he will ride to the devil!—sure enough!—I remember the time when Frank Connor would have given his two eyes for an invitation from me, or the worst of my name. The blackguard!—to have the presumption to suppose that I'd allow him—or any *he* who ever wore a head, to interfere

with me, or my line of conduct!" And here Mrs. Daly thumped the table so energetically, as to make three of the elderly gentlemen who sat at whist, start, and the fourth—he was the master of the house—shake all over. "I wouldn't think that," continued Mrs. Daly, snapping her fingers, "of taking any man's life that would dare tell me what I ought to do, or what I oughtn't to do—I'll not ask that, girl!—I'd see them all dead and d——d first!'

Mrs. Daly was a lady of—as we once heard it politely phrased—a "*peculiar*" temper; who pinched her maids, swore at her butler, browbeat her acquaintances, flogged her husband, and "kept down her daughter," as well as she could, for Kitty had a spirit of her own, which would now and then assert itself; indeed, Peter Harry Joe insisted there were as good makings for a tartar about her, as any girl he knew.

Another rat-a-tat at the door; and this time Pat appears, not with a note merely, but a

whole bundle, of all forms and sizes, which he is dropping upon the carpet every step he takes, in his fright and confusion, for he feels that the eyes of every lady in the room—young, old, and middle-aged—and, far worse than all, his mistress's eye, were fixed upon him.

"What vagabond brought these?" inquired his lady, snatching them from his hand.

"Oh, 'twasn't a vagabond at all, ma'am, plaze your honour, but an officer from the barracks, ma'am—a rattling fine gentleman, ma'am, six feet high, with .big, black whiskers, ma'am; but I don't know his name, ma'am, bekase I never heerd it, ma'am, plaze your honour."

"Oh, my dear, that's Captain Hilton, as sure as I'm alive!" observed Gratty, with a look of despair to Kitty; "I know him by the description: the handsomest man in the regiment, and a man of fortune. Oh, what in the world will we do, Kitty?"

What Kitty's reply to this question might have been, whether evasive or categorical, must for ever remain in doubt, her voice being completely drowned by her mother's accents, addressing Pat, as follows :—

"Would you know the scoundrel again?"

"The officer, ma'am?—I would, ma'am."

"Very well. Run after him as fast as you can set leg to the ground, with his own note back again ; and mind you tell him I didn't open it, and ——"

"I shawl, ma'am." And Pat was hurrying out of the room, with the most commendable alacrity, to execute his lady's commands—his movements being not a little accelerated by a desire to attain, as soon as possible, a refuge from the storm he saw gathering, and which would, ere long, burst on somebody's head—when stopped by his mistress :—

"Where are you going, you numbskull, with only half my message? First, you'll tell him I didn't open his note, nor any of them ; here,

take them all; that I wouldn't think it worth my while. And then you'll say, with my compliments, that I consider him a lowlived, impudent blackguard, like the rest of his cloth. Do you understand?" she added, angrily, perceiving that Pat stood stockstill. "Answer me, this minute! or ——"

"Faith, ma'am, I'd be afeard, ma'am, he'd bate me, ma'am, if I was to say that, plaze your honour, ma'am," replied Pat, in a voice scarcely audible, from apprehension of the consequences of such unprecedented temerity on his part.

"Afeard he'll bate you, if you do!" repeated his mistress, scornfully, while she scanned him from head to foot: "aren't you afraid that *I'll* beat you, if you do *not*—eh?"

Apparently Pat considered this by no means improbable, for he immediately quitted the room.

How shall we attempt to describe the anger, the disdain, the vexation, the consternation,

which clouded the faces of all the fair company, as apologies continued pouring in, one after the other, as fast as the door could be answered.

"I told Mrs. Daly how it would be," observed Mrs. O'Keefe to Mrs. Flanagan, taking care, however, not to be within hearing distance of Mrs. Daly. "I warned her, but it was all no good. Another would have taken warning from them not coming to my party; though, of course, Mrs. Daly thought that she —who can entertain so much better than I can, and is so much more respected, and has her house and her protector spared to her— was not to take pattern by me, a lone widow, living on my small means, with a houseful of daughters to dress and do for. But, for all that," continued the good lady, secretly reconciled to her daughters being disappointed, for the sake of her friend being humbled; "but for all that, when it comes to the point, it seems Mrs. Daly is not thought more of than

myself, reduced as I am in my circumstances, to what I once was, and would be still, if I got my own; and no one ought to know that better than you, Mrs. Flanagan."

"Well, well, no help for spilt milk, my dear woman," hastily rejoined Mrs. Flanagan, apprehensive that the foregoing observation was a prelude to Mrs. O'Keefe's favourite topic—the roguery of Jerry Quin, the attorney—and Mrs. Flanagan hated law as she hated poison: she had been listening to it as long as she had had ears in her head, and never was a bit the wiser at the end, than she had been at the beginning. "And, by the way, talking of spilt milk," she continued, "hadn't we as well get our tea, Mrs. Daly, as sit fretting here?"

"I didn't so much care about the beaux of the town," observed Gratty O'Keefe to Kitty Daly, as they moved together towards the tea-table, "for they are no great things,"—Gratty heaved a sigh, nevertheless—"if they hadn't gone and set the officers against us; so pro-

voking!—and such a darling regiment as it is—angels! 'pon my honour; and such a lot of them single, my dear, and men of fortune! The Miss Heffernans say it's a most elegant regiment; and they ought to be good judges, for they know all the armies in Europe, travelling so much. They are at the Heffernans every day; I see them going in; singing seconds, and writing in their albums, and every thing!" and again poor Gratty sighed.

"I'll engage they are," rejoined Kitty. "They know better than to quarrel with the Heffernans, who give balls and dinners for the sake of a girl they know nothing about, to please the scamps of the town, who want to cram her down people's throats, whether they will or no. What assurance she must have, to be sure, to stop here, after all the ladies cutting her. Mrs. Heffernan was the last to give her up. I don't think she ever would, indeed—she is so fond of having any one she can talk of the continent to, and that she can get to

waltz, and keep her daughters in countenance —only Mrs. Flanagan told her Miss Dillon was setting her cap at Bob."

"Whoever she is setting her cap at, I wish we hadn't gone to cross purposes with her," replied Gratty. "We are paying dear enough, I'm sure, for leaving her out of our parties; not a man comes near us, you see. And what do you say, my dear, but they have gone and written to her, not to mind a pair of infernal old hags—that's Mrs. Flanagan, you know, and your mamma."

Kitty laughed.

"And a pack of girls," continued Gratty, "without beauty and education, who are envious of her loveliness and accomplishments."

Kitty tossed her ringlets, till you would think she intended to toss them off her head altogether.

Gratty proceeded—"But, that the gentlemen, they said, were one and all determined to stand by her to the last; and that their res-

pect could only be equalled by their admiration—a something that way—and such quantities of game, and fruit, and flowers, as they send for presents, my dear!—On account of lodging along with her, at the nunnery, I see all that is going forward, you know. Then when she goes out, which indeed, she never does latterly, except on a Sunday, to church—such work, my dear, as they go on with—such flourishing bows as they make her—you'd think 'twas the lady lieutenant—nothing less—and she walking along, blushing like anything. And when they meet me, pretending not to see me—some of them—or else, making me a stiff bow, instead of shaking hands.—As for Peter Harry Joe, he looks me straight in the face, as impudent as possible, and passes me by!—too hard upon me, I declare."

"Why should it be harder on you, than anybody else, Gratty?"

"Oh, nothing—only 'tisn't fair I should suffer for the good of other people," and here

Gratty glanced somewhat enviously at her friend, Kitty.

"Now, Gratty, I wonder at you—upon my honor I do. I thought you had more sense than be jealous because Mrs. Flanagan intends Frank O'Connor for me.—Sure, as she was saying the other day to your mamma, there are plenty of men in the world besides him."

Kitty spoke coaxingly, for she had before observed symptoms of discontent in the O'Keefes, and was not a little apprehensive of a defection to the enemy.

"We will all get married, you'll see, if we only have patience, and stand by one another, as friends and neighbours ought. But, you know as well as I do, Gratty, dear, that none of us could do any good for ourselves, or for one another, if that girl was allowed to stay—'pon my honor, we wouldn't.—And such a nice regiment as this is!—'twould be too bad to lose your chance—wouldn't it now, Gratty, darling?—and as you say yourself, they are so

much more to be liked than our own men—and not half so cunning!—and you always such a favorite with the military!—To tell you the truth, my dear, only I dare not contradict Mrs. Flanagan, and my mamma, 'tis no castle in the air of mine, I promise you, to set my cap at Frank O'Connor, for you never knew a man in your life so tiresome to flirt with!—gives me quite a head-ache, I declare!—And I'll tell you what, Gratty—upon your honor though, you won't mention what I am going to tell you?"

Gratty gave the required pledge, and Kitty proceeded:

"I heard Mrs. Flanagan saying to your mamma, the other day, that if you let this regiment slip through your fingers, the way you did all the others, that she ought to make you stop at home, since you were doing no good for yourself, and she losing by you, and to bring Anna Maria out, who was a smart girl, and too long kept back, striving to get you off first,

not to have so many girls to dress at a time. So you see, Gratty, you must look sharp."

"I declare that's too bad," exclaimed Gratty, more than half crying; "I don't know, I'm sure, what I ever did to make her an enemy of mine."

"Oh, Mrs. Flanagan is like nobody else in the world, you know. 'Tisn't out of ill-nature she spoke that way; and I would not have told you at all, only that you might see 'twas your interest, as well as mine, to get rid of Rose Dillon."

Gratty's coming rejoinder was interrupted by her mamma.

"Stop whispering, you and Kitty Daly, till I make out what that noise can be I hear under the window."

There was a pause. The interesting tones of masculine voices, and the animating tread of masculine boots, were distinctly audible.

Gratty O'Keefe and Kitty Daly exchanged looks of intelligence.

"Our beaux, come to spite us, as sure as I'm alive, my dear," said Kitty.

"I wonder are any of the new officers there," rejoined Gratty. "I'd give anything to know. I have a mind to take a peep behind the curtain."

Gratty had just taken up a good position for reconnoitering the enemy, when she was discovered by the keen eye of Peter Harry Joe, and a burst of uproarious merriment ensued upon this discovery.

Mrs. Daly could no longer restrain her indignation, but pushing aside the fair Gratty, with no very gentle hand, she threw up the sash.

"How dare you make such a row under my windows, like common blackguards, as you are? Do you call this manners—this the behaviour of gentlemen—to come and annoy an unprotected faymale?"

"Unprotected!" repeated Peter Harry Joe,

as if to himself; "well, to be sure, that's all she makes of Tom Daly!"

"Tom Daly, indeed!" cried the lady, scornfully. "If Tom Daly was the man he ought to be, and had the sperrit of a mouse, he wouldn't lave one of ye in a whole skin! Come, be off this minute, ye impudent scoundrels, or, as sure as you live, I will ——"

But the rest of the denunciation was lost in Peter Harry's jeering shouts of "Hear! hear!" and in Mrs. Flanagan's exhortations "to sit down, in the name of goodness, and finish her tea in peace; for that it was making too much of such tag-rag-and-bobtail to trouble one's head what they did, or what they didn't do."

"Lots of officers, I declare!" whispered Gratty, mournfully, to Kitty. "A pretty pass has Mrs. Flanagan brought things too with her advice—setting the men against us this way. It would be better, I'm sure, to make-up with that girl, and let her come to our parties, than

to be without a man at all, as we are now. She couldn't marry 'em all, you know, Kitty ? What's the use of being so obstinate, when one get's nothing by it ?—just cutting off one's nose to spite one's face—isn't it, now ? Old women are horrid bothers, I declare !—I wish to goodness they'd give in !"

"Give in !" repeated Mrs. Flanagan, whose quick ears had caught the last words of the foregoing sentence, pronounced as they were with somewhat incautious emphasis—"Give in !—never, while I brathe !"

"Give in !" exclaimed Mrs. Daly—"I'd sooner be stretched in my coffin than give in ! Who dares talk in my house of giving in ?—giving in to that blackguard crew ! Never let me hear such a word from your lips, ye little minxes, ye !" And here Mrs. Daly looked round on the assembled misses, so as to have struck terror into a stouter heart than poor Gratty's.

"To tell you the truth, then," said Mrs.

O'Keefe, coming to her daughter's relief, "I'm afraid ye will get the worst of it with Frank O'Connor, to say nothing of Peter Harry Joe—they are bitter pills, both one and the other of 'em."

"They will find their match, then, I can tell them," rejoined Mrs. Flanagan, assuming an air of more than even her accustomed importance, "if they were twice as bitter. But let us only be steady, that's all, and we will win the day yet, with the blessing of God, and give them a lesson they won't be apt to forget in a hurry, I promise you. They will soon get tired of this work, and come *palinoding*—you'll see they will."

But they did not "get tired, or come palinoding." For once in her life, at any rate, Mrs. Flanagan was found to have counted without her host.

Day after day—week after week passed; the belligerents carefully watching each other's movements, and offering high rewards to de-

sertion from each other's ranks—still no symptom of "giving in" was observable on either side.

Such tossing of heads on the part of the ladies; such pulling-up of stocks on the part of the gentlemen; such giggling; such assumed indifference, and real mortification; such whistling and *cigaring;* such whispering; such mysterious nods and winks; such writing of anonymous letters; such hoaxing and nicknaming; such ripping-up of old stories; in a word, such a miniature *guerre de la Fronde*, as could not, perhaps, be met in any other locality, except that in which our scene is laid; where both parties, being more or less closely connected, being all either cousins to one another, or cousins to one another's cousins, might be looked upon as an extended family circle, with all the intimacies, all the bitternesses, all the fallings-out and droppings-in, which are incidental to such a state of society.

Victory for a long time hung doubtful; the female part making up in acrimony and doggedness what they wanted in strength and spirit; when, at length, who should come to Mrs. Flanagan's one evening, out of breath with running, but Mrs. O'Keefe's maid, to tell Mrs. Flanagan, with Mrs. O'Keefe's love, that she had just heard from Miss Fennell's maid, that they were going away immediately, for certain, as they had just been giving her warning.

Now dismay sat on the face of the Dillonites. They cursed, they swore, they vowed vengeance; they were at their wits' end. Even Peter Harry Joe had no resource to meet this exigency. "The game was up."

"Not so!" said the gallant captain. "We will sell our lives dearly; we will not give in without some hard fighting still. If driven from the town, we must only rally, and make a stand in the citadel. An old soldier like me is not to be taken by surprise. If they mine,

we must countermine—that's all ! No, no !—marrying Bess shall find Frank O'Connor too many for her !"

The next chapter will show whether or not the captain verified his boast.

CHAPTER VIII.

Miss Fennell and her niece were sitting together, busied in preparation for their approaching departure, when the maid, with a look of consternation, burst into the room.

"She's below in the carriage-and-four, and they'll be a-top o' ye in two minits, so they will, if you don't gother up the things smart."

"What! the carriage-and-four!" exclaimed Rose.

"Oh, not at all, miss, but the captain and hersel'."

"Hersel'!—who?—what can you mean, Peggy?"

"Them English do be so bothered, betimes, there's no makin' 'em sinsible of anything one

says !" thought Peggy ; but while she was considering how she could render what was already "as plain as the nose on one's face" still plainer, the noise of advancing footsteps proclaimed the approach of visitors, whoever they might be.

A lady and gentleman stood in the doorway. The gentleman was quickly recognized as their and our acquaintance, O'Connor ; but the lady, a tall and distinguished-looking person, was unknown to them, even by sight. She was, however, speedily presented to them by the captain, with all "the pomp and circumstance" befitting the occasion, as—"Miss Whaley, of Ballymagawley."

This announcement of an unexpected honour not producing the flutter of surprize our friend had anticipated, he added, with a slight tinge of reproof in his tone—

"You are not probably aware, ladies, that Miss Whaley has come all the way from Bally-

magawley, upwards of twenty miles, on purpose to wait on you."

"How very kind!" said Miss Fennell. I regret you should find us occupied in preparations for our immediate removal."

"Oh, no, not immediate, I hope," rejoined Miss Whaley, earnestly; and placing a seat for herself between the aunt and niece, she apologised for the tardiness of her visit. "But I had not been very long returned home; and, until a day or two since, I was not aware how much pleasure I had missed, in not having earlier made your acquaintance."

Rose, who had heard much of the repulsive appearance and haughty deportment of the young heiress, was astonished at the frankness, nay, almost cordiality of her manner, and the particularly engaging expression of her countenance. The sullen complexion and irregular features were, in her opinion, more than redeemed by the intellect which beamed from the

dark, eloquent eyes ; the smiles of kindness that played round the well-formed, though somewhat wide mouth ; and the candour and energy stamped on the open brow.

When displeased with, or simply indifferent to her company, Clara Whaley would be reckoned plain ; but there were times, and the present was one of them, when she might almost have been termed handsome, at least by those who, like Rose, are susceptible to the beauty of mind.

" Captain O'Connor, may I beg you will have the carriage and horses put up at Doherty's ; and pray let Mrs. Flanagan know that I will sleep at her house to-night."

The captain, who was quiet and unaffected in Miss Whaley's company, as he was pompous and consequential out of it, immediately rose to obey her commands.

" Miss Fennell, I have something to say to you," continued Clara. " Are you in a gracious mood to-day ?—but ah, what a question !—you

do not look as if you ever could be in any other."

"Not towards you, at any rate. Believe me, I feel deeply the generosity which has induced you to interest yourself so kindly for total strangers; and should we never again meet, I shall recollect, in Miss Whaley, the kind-hearted, as well as the richly-endowed."

She spoke with emotion, which seemed contagious, for Clara's eyes filled.

"I should wish thus to be thought of by you, and such as you—but we shall meet again, and often, I hope. Henceforward I shall pay more attention to Captain O'Connor's encomiums; for to say truth, notwithstanding his raptures about seraphic beauty, and consummate elegance, and accomplished minds, et cætera, et cætera, I did not expect to meet what I have met. However, when I heard of oppression, like a brave knight of the olden times, I buckled on my armour of proof, and shouted—'Whaley to the rescue.' And now, for this same thing,

I have to say to you, Miss Fennell, I want you to return with me in the morning to Ballymagawley. This may appear an abrupt proposal on a first meeting; but I am one who would never willingly leave till tomorrow what could be done to-day. Form of all kinds I hate—punctilio and etiquette I cannot away with! You look as if you were meditating a refusal, Miss Fennell; and now I tell you, beforehand, I won't take it."

"It would be depriving Rose and myself of a very great pleasure; but the fact is, we have begun already, as you may perceive, to pack-up, and I have written to friends abroad."

"Oh, never mind your friends abroad!" interrupted Clara; "tell them a wild Irish girl has laid violent hands on you. Miss Dillon is on my side, I see, and it will be hard if, between us both, we can't manage you. I candidly admit, though, I have no better inducement to offer than myself—and my mountains."

"And what could you offer half so attrac-

tive ?" said Rose, eagerly. "The scenery, by all accounts, is worthy of the proprietor."

Clara acknowledged the compliment with a smile.

"Yes—it is not only worth seeing, but, Irish though it be, worth coming to see. That churl, Johnson, I never can forgive him his ill-natured fling at my poor country. As for myself, I am worth coming to see, too. It does not sound pretty to say so, to be sure ; but, you must know, I never talk pretty. I couldn't if I would, and I wouldn't if I could. Mind, I do not pretend to beauties or sublimities of any kind ; I'm just a quiet, unassuming, unadorned sort of a body. Such as I am, however, I am myself," she added, smiling ; "and in those days, allow me to say, that is no slight boast. To be *one's-self* is not always the method best calculated to please the world at large ; but that cannot be helped. If having given out my feelings and opinions in all the *abandon* of an honest nature, without

varnish or dressing-up of any kind, I am liked, well and good; I have the satisfaction of knowing 'tis I myself who pleases, and not somebody else in my stead. And now this brings me to the most important point of my discourse. As an act of justice—mere justice—you ought to give me an opportunity of effacing all the aspersions cast upon me. People have told you I was a very unprepossessing young lady. Come now, on the word of a Christian, have they not, Miss Fennell? Ah! I see by your countenance that truth and politeness are striving which shall win the day. But I know very well what is said of me. I know that I am called proud and cold, while it so happens I'm neither, though quite willing to acknowledge that I may often appear to be both; simply because I can't appear interested in persons who do not interest me. There's the head and front of my offending, and what is there so very singular in it? Miss Fennell, that

smile of yours is not a smile of acquiescence; you think me a regular Irish bear, I am sure."

"No, no—not exactly that; but ——"

"Well, something like it, then," said Clara, good-humouredly.

"When we are better acquainted, I will tell you," replied Miss Fennell, smiling.

"Oh, no—let me hear it now. What is it you do think of me?"

"Much that I should prefer saying to another rather than to yourself, lest you might be inclined to suspect me of flattery; and something ——"

"You like me, then," interrupted Clara, eagerly, and colouring with pleasure. "I am glad of it, but not surprised; for being a firm believer in the doctrine of sympathies, I always set it down as an axiom, that when one party is strongly attracted, the other must be so too. And now for the something, dear lady, which is true, but not flattering. You need not fear offending me by sincerity, be-

cause in you it would, I am sure, be tempered with kindness. I can't say I consider the generality of people qualified 'to tell their minds,' as they call it; for I remark they invariably choose the moment when their feelings and yours have been mutually irritated by personal conflicts of opinion, to inform you how vehement, how wilful, how misjudging, they and all the rest of the world consider you. Now, under such circumstances, who can wonder if we should be found defending the very conduct that at other times we would be the first to condemn. Cool and amiable, however, as I am now," she added, smiling, "I shall be candour itself. Come, try me!"

"You are preparing yourself for something very alarming, I perceive," said Miss Fennell; "but you need not. What I have to say will not personally offend you, I imagine; and my hesitation, therefore, has simply arisen from a reluctance to enter abruptly upon an interest-

ing and important subject. It just chanced to occur to me, while you were speaking, how true it is, that every human heart, if left to itself, selects some one virtue to pamper, and indulge, and spoil! This man prides himself on his justice; and he becomes harsh, unrelenting, unmerciful. Another glories in the generosity with which he parts with his money, the liberality of his opinions; and he becomes a spendthrift and a latitudinarian. The idol of a third is his sincerity; but, unfortunately, he converts a disdain of the arts by which popularity is acquired, into a disregard of the feelings of those with whom he is brought into contact. Now, if this last were under better guidance than his own impulse, he would perceive that attention to the courtesies of life is not a mere servile, unnecessary compliance with the conventional rules of society, he would no longer view it as a form, but as a principle founded upon Christian benevolence, measuring to others what he

would wish should be meted to him in return. And granting that this person may be dull, that one silly, and this other ignorant, does it follow that he can take no kind of interest in them? Upon all are not bestowed an expanded intellect, nor a lively sensibility; but all are possessed of an immortal soul. Have we nothing to say to those who are sharers in the same lofty hopes as ourselves—who are walking, by our side, the same rough road, to the same eternal country? Nothing? Because our common Father has granted to us here some advantages it has pleased him to withhold from them. Have we nothing to say, on the other hand, to those who are living as if death were a word—eternity a fable? Can we be indifferent to their fate, whether for weal or woe, in the other world, because they do not present, while here, anything to to strike or to engage us?"

Miss Fennell had been silent some moments before Clara replied.

"And so want of politeness is want of kindness, is it? Well, you are the first to suggest that view to me; but I feel there is much truth in your observations. Till I grow *good*, however, you must not expect to find me consistently and invariably civil: I will make the attempt, notwithstanding. In some of our walks about Ballymagawley, we will resume this subject. Religion could not, I am sure, find in any one a more gentle, persuasive interpreter than in you, nor could it be anywhere expounded to greater advantage than amid the solemn, solitary grandeur of the surrounding scenery. I must make the most of my time, during papa's absence, to obtain an interest in your regard; for when you become acquainted with him, I expect to be quite a secondary personage. For, besides possessing the most winning manners, and an unruffled sweetness of temper, you will discern in him intellectual gifts of no ordinary class; a delightful flow of conversation, abounding in

anecdote, with just enough of sentiment to soften its brilliancy. Must not that mind be possessed of almost inexhaustible resources, which, after years of intercourse, presents no monotony, no repetition? I have been listening to my father all my life, and yet I prefer him, as a mere companion, to anybody I ever met. And now, being all this, and a great deal more than any description of mine could do justice to, I hand him over to you, Miss Fennell, while I make a league, offensive and defensive, with your niece. By the way, unless you were aware of my abhorrence of young ladies in general, you could not possibly estimate the honourable distinction implied in that offer. Those be-ribboned, be-feathered things, of gauze and giggle—flowers and folly, called girls—how I do detest them! Creatures, whose conversation is a patch-work of parties and proposals—of handsome men and handsome fortunes; who are silly, without being simple—hardened in character, without being

strengthened in mind! Oh, defend me from these figurantes, without sentiment or expression, who flutter in the gaudy pageant of life; who have neither hearts that can feel, or heads that can think."

"And so to interest you, as to interest a Frenchman, a woman must be married, I suppose," said Rose, smiling.

"Oh, by no means: it would be merely an exchange of evils. What is the married woman of to-day, but the girl of yesterday? The dull, tiresome possessor of the good of which she was then the frivolous and nonsensical pursuer; the eagerness of pursuit succeeded by the satiety of attainment: that is the only difference. And dissertations on the nursery take place of raptures on the ball-room; and instead of lamentations on the inconsistency of lovers, you are entertained with complaints of the extravagance or the tyranny of husbands. If they would but rock their baby's cradle, and hem their hus-

bands' pocket-handkerchiefs quietly at home, and not bore other people with their domestic trials or blessings, what an advantage to society at large, and to me in particular!"

"Your own sex does not seem to stand very high in your opinion," observed Rose.

"As high as the other, at any rate," she replied, carelessly. "But there is one class of women I like; those to whom love, as 'tis called, is no longer the engrossing object; for they, probably, may have something to give to friendship. I patronize elderly single ladies; perhaps, because I expect, one of these days, to belong to the sisterhood myself."

"You!" exclaimed Rose.

"Yes, I; what is there so extraordinary in the supposition?"

"Very extraordinary, surely, that a person possessing your advantages could ——"

"Fail of being asked, is it?" interrupted Clara. "Oh, no, I did not mean to say that. It would, indeed, be extraordinary if a per-

son possessing my advantages, as you are pleased to call them, were not asked; but, my good child, would it not be still more extraordinary, if possessing such advantages, I were to accept?"

"And would you, then, make marriage a mere question of barter?"

"Unquestionably," rejoined Clara; "when I find it so considered by others. Credit me, the heiress may acquire as full insight into the frailties and deformities of humanity, as could the Lieutenant de Police, a Confesseur du Roi, in the most palmy days of brigandage and courtly vices, under the ancien regime of your belle France. Oh, the miserable, contemptible view it presents! condescending to such meanness of flattery; in many instances, ready to sacrifice their dearest affections; and all this 'parce que j'ai de l'argent comptant, de l'argent comptant,'" she added, humming a little French air. "Apropos, you are a good musician, I hear; so was I once—in my ca-

techism and governess days, that's to say; but I have since made a notable discovery, to wit, that music, like marriage, is not worth half the trouble it costs, and have given it up. For those who think otherwise, however, there are harps, pianos, guitars, and all appliances to boot, at Ballymagawley, as you will speedily find. To-morrow, then, at twelve; *au revoir*. No, no, I'll take no denial."

And so saying, she ran down stairs, accompanied by Rose, who insisted on conducting her visitor through the intricacies of the passages formerly mentioned; and, having taken a cordial leave of one another, the young ladies separated.

CHAPTER IX.

WHILE proceeding towards Mrs. Flanagan's, Clara was so busily engaged thinking of her new acquaintances, that, in her state of abstraction, she never noticed the bows and curtsies of those whom she accidently encountered. Rude, disagreeable Miss Whaley!

Poor Clara, the very people she thus neglected, had they wanted a friend, would have found in her a zealous, indefatigable one—ever willing to serve, indifferent to please.

Her decided, impatient knock was quickly recognized by Mrs. Flanagan, as "her darling Clara Whaley's."

What action, indeed, is there of daily life,

which does not bear upon it the impress of an individual character?

Miss Whaley had already ascended the staircase, three steps at a bound, before Mrs. Flanagan, although aware of her approach, had reached the drawing-room door.

"Clara, my heart, you are welcome—welcome a thousand times!" and Mrs. Flanagan bestowed a sonorous kiss on the young heiress. "But why did you not let me know you were coming, that I might have things as they ought to be for Miss Whaley? But what's the matter—you look uneasy, displeased?"

"I just look what I am, then."

"And who has vexed you, my darling?"

"You have, Bess."

"Me!—is it me?—me, to displease or annoy the one that I'd give my heart's blood for?—How could that be?"

"In few words, I'll tell you—your conduct by Miss Dillon," Clara said, gravely.

"My conduct by Miss Dillon!" repeated

Mrs. Flanagan, in some confusion.—"Why, what did I do to the girl?—But I see, Frank O'Connor has been at his tricks; though indeed, I think he might find a better subject of conversation for any young lady, let alone Miss Whaley, than to speak of a person of her description."

"Oh, Bess, that's all nonsense—worse than nonsense—you cannot even yourself believe the things you have said, and insinuated about these ladies.—Don't interrupt me," she added, perceiving Mrs. Flanagan about to break forth into angry expostulation—"You may, or may not believe what you have given out—I certainly do not."

Mrs. Flanagan looked highly offended.

"Your father isn't so, then—and if he was at home, I'm sure, he would no more allow you to come, than he'd cut his head off—that I can tell you!"

"Bess, I request you will never make use of my father's name as authorising—directly

or indirectly—anything absurd or malicious.—I should consider such an attempt on your part, an unpardonable liberty.

Clara spoke in so decided a tone of displeasure, that Mrs. Flanagan did not venture to urge the subject further, contenting herself with observing—

"That there were people in the world who would not let you say white was white, nor black was black, if they choose you should not say so."

Clara laughed. "Oh, Bess, that's a hard slap!—What would you take, to give it to me before company?—not your own weight in gold would bribe you. But I see, I must prepare for a thorough-going, out-and-out, tooth-and-nail battle—such as friends alone can have. Well, the sooner it is over, the better, since it is to be at all, Bess. I have invited Miss Dillon and her aunt to Ballymagawley."

"Invited them to Ballymagawley!" repeated Mrs. Flanagan, in a tone of astonishment, and

of as much indignation as habitual respect would allow her to manifest—"I am obleeged to you," she added, after a pause—"I never expected to see the day that you would take part with my enemies, Miss Whaley."

"I beg you will not call me out of my name, whatever you do; I have been always Clara, hitherto. If you begin to Miss Whaley me, I must Mrs. Flanagan you—and how strange that would seem to us both—wouldn't it, Bess? Now listen quietly.—You say I take part with your enemies—tell me who they are, for I am not aware you have any."

But Mrs. Flanagan still maintaining an indignant silence, Clara proceeded—

"I take part neither against you, or with anybody else; but I take the part of justice—of common humanity, and I should do so, even against my own father, dearly as I love him, were he capable of an unkind, or an unjust action."

"That's a quare sort of friendship and love,

to my thinking, that would give up one's father, or one's old friend, for some sort of an idea, got out of a book!—Them new fashioned notions, to tell you the truth, Miss Whaley, I don't understand. In my time, the friend in need was the friend indeed; what's the good of them that will only stand by you when you don't want them?—sure everybody will do that —the deuce thank 'em!—but 'tis your friend you must look to, when you are wrong, supposing I was itself, which I was not—but whether or no, I little thought that the child I rared on my knee, and loved, and prided in, as if she was my own, would give me up, to please Frank Connor, a little, mane, consated upstart—and if you knew but all, does not speak so very respectful of yourself."

Here Mrs. Flanagan repeated the observations made by Captain O'Connor, already known to the reader, accompanied by some, perhaps unintentional, exaggerations; but greatly to her surprise and mortification, Miss Whaley

did not manifest the slightest displeasure, or even discomposure.

"My dear Bess, what is all this to the purpose?—You cannot, surely, persist in thinking that I called upon these ladies to gratify O'Connor?"

"I am a bad hand at arguing—I don't understand fine words and fine sentiments—it matters little what a person's motive is in vexing one, so one is vexed; and I had rather you'd stab me at once, than give me up as a laughing-stock to a little whelp of his kind—to be outdone by Frank Connor, indeed!—have him, and that bletheremskite of a fellow, Peter Harry Joe, crowing over me!—and all your doing!—but the world is wide, thank God!" she added, rising, and walking up and down the room, something in the guise of a chafed lioness—"I'll leave the town to you, and to your friends, and see whether any of them, old or new, will ever think as much of you as I done, Clara Whaley, little as you think of me, in return!"

"Now, Bess, how unjust you are!—how unkind to say so," exclaimed Clara, throwing her arms affectionately round her angry friend.

"Won't you let a person have feeling, itself?—Carry the world before you, why not!—but don't wonder if people are not pleased at being trampled under your feet, whenever the humour takes you!"

"If any one else had said that of me, I know well what would have been your answer—that Clara Whaley was incapable of trampling on the meanest thing that lives, not to talk of the friend of her childhood. I have come myself, to tell what I have done, and why I have done it—for I was anxious no other should be the bearer of a disagreeable communication."

"Disagreeable enough, in all conscience, and ill-natured enough, too, which is worse," Mrs. Flanagan muttered.

"Bess, let us make an end of this, for I am really tired repeating, over and over again, the same thing."

Miss Whaley spoke in a tone of impatience, which was not slow in producing a due effect on Mrs. Flanagan.

"I wish the d—l had Frank Connor!" said she, after a pause, "before he put between you and me, Clara, my heart!" I shouldn't so much mind Kitty's disappointment—though, of course, I can't but be sorry for it—if I could but stop him going about bragging how he got the better of me."

"Well, have the first story yourself, then," rejoined Clara. "Admit, candidly, that you were in the wrong, and are now willing to make the best reparation in your power. You may add, moreover, that I have used my influence over you for this purpose. You will not be unwilling to acknowledge Clara Whaley's power; will you, my old friend—my own friend—my first spoiler—Bess Carroll? You remember the dancing-shoes I made you change five times. By-the-bye, this ball of Mrs. Heffernan's—when is it to be?"

"Why, in about a fortnight, I believe; but it is not a ball, but a breakfast—a feet shampether, I think they call it. But what do you want to know about it for?"

"Because I have changed my mind, and intend going."

"Oh, then, do you?" cried Mrs. Flanagan, eagerly; for it occurred to her that this would be a favourable occasion for bringing about the meeting with Mr. Foster.

"Well, I have not heard you say anything this long time which pleased me better than that. Sure it's a shocking life for a young creature like you, to be shut up from morning till night, and not a man to speak to but your own father. All I wonder at is, that you are not ten times more whimsical than you are."

Clara laughed. "What a compliment! But, Bess, I must have an invitation for Miss Dillon also. I intend bringing her with me."

Mrs. Flanagan's countenance fell, and she began hesitatingly—

"The whole county will be there, and they will think it ——"

"No matter what they think it," Clara interrupted; "I will not go without her—so that's settled. It must be sufficient, henceforward," she added, haughtily, "that Miss Dillon has been my guest, to ensure her a polite reception anywhere and everywhere."

"Don't be angry, now, Clara, if I just ask one question—What do you think your father will say to this great intimacy, all of a sudden, with a girl nobody ever heard of before? You know he is particular enough in some things."

"Leave my father and me to deal with one another; I will do nothing to offend him, you may be sure. And now, Bess, are we not friends—as good friends as ever?" she added, holding out her hand.

But before Mrs. Flanagan had quite made up her mind what answer to give, the announcement of dinner cut short the deliberation, and operated as a charm on her ruffled

temper. Hospitality was, in her opinion, one of the cardinal virtues; and, while heaping her guest's plate with "warm bits," and inundating it with melted butter, she forgot all her injuries and mortifications, and became restored to her usual good humour.

To do Mrs. Flanagan justice, she was always disposed to make the best of the inevitable evils of life; but, in carrying out this laudable principle, she not unfrequently subjected herself to the charge of inconsistency. Having been disturbed in her scheme of injuring Miss Dillon, she now set about considering how she could best serve her. We have before stated, that one of Mrs. Flanagan's motives for persecuting Rose was, a desire of proving her influence, and of making her opinion "the opinion of the town." But, among her various peculiarities, not the least remarkable was this—she generally abandoned an opinion as soon as she had succeeded in making it "the opinion of the town." Having sown the dragon's-teeth, and raised a host

of enemies to the object of her disapprobation for the time being, she would then proceed to destroy, just as vigorously as she had laboured to produce them. Mrs. Flanagan's friends, therefore, were never surprized to find her quarrelling with those who presumed to think the identical things she had insisted that they should think a short time previously, and swearing that all that had been said on the subject "was a bundle of unfounded and confounded lies." However, these lies, being known to have emanated principally, if not altogether, from herself—a circumstance which, in her zeal, she generally managed to forget—her hearers did not consider themselves called upon to dispute the estimation she was disposed to attach to her own veracity, and, therefore, obligingly agreed in admitting, at her desire, that all she had had been saying, for weeks or months, was "a bundle of lies from beginning to end." Had she succeeded in banishing Miss Dillon, it is highly probable she would afterwards have been anxious to re-

call her. Be this as it may, by the time the hour of retiring to rest arrived, she had become quite reconciled to the object of her former dislike.

"And so Clara, my heart, you like Miss Dillon? I'm sure, in that case, I wouldn't for a hundred pound she had gone away. The blush Rose!—well, she certainly has an uncommonly pretty blush, no one can deny that; and she seems a sweet, innocent creature; and as for the poor aunt, she is as worthy a woman as ever breathed, and does a great deal of charity on her small means; and a gentlewoman, every inch of her, let who will say to the contrary. And I'm thinking it wouldn't be amiss if I was to pay her a visit when she returns home, and give her a little advice about her niece. One that couldn't get a husband for herself, isn't apt to know how to pick up one for another. If they had a grain of sense between them, they would have made their own of Frank Connor by this. A very

little helping would do the business for a girl like her. I'll try what I can do, at any rate. I'll be on the look out, and 'tis hard if we can't find something to suit. Frank Connor would propose in a minute, I'm sure, if he thought you wished it. No—you wouldn't care. Well, good night, my heart's darling! There never was your equal in this world for goodness; I'll say that for you."

CHAPTER X.

Miss Fennell and her niece arose early the following morning, after a night passed in meditation, rather than in sleep; but it was not unpleasing meditation, nor uncharacteristic of the respective parties. As might be expected, from the devotional cast of Miss Fennell's mind, her reflections had been those of gratitude to the overruling Power, which can educe good from evil, and mould hearts to his will.

Happy those who can thus trace a guiding hand through the every-day incidents of life; for they are gathering up treasures of faith and hope, that will not fail in time of need.

Rose's excitable imagination and sanguine temperament had found in Miss Whaley's

visit a subject upon which to exercise her skill in weaving gorgeous webs from such common materials as might prove totally useless to one less practised in the art.

In the energetic, kind-hearted young heiress, she had discovered a powerful enchantress, who was to unlock the book of fate, clear up all mysteries, solve all doubts, restore to her the lost and only brother, introduce her to the more distant and, hitherto, unknown relatives; in a word, place within her reach all that earth can give—wealth, consideration, family affection. It is not, then, wonderful that, with a conviction (for conviction it was in Rose's mind) of important services to be rendered by her new acquaintance, she should be totally unable, as she informed her aunt, at breakfast, "to talk or think of anything, or anybody else."

"What a delightful creature! I feel as if I had known her all my life: so frank, so kind, so perfectly unaffected; with just enough of

singularity to make her piquante and original, and stopping short precisely at the point where eccentricity might become bluntness or awkwardness. Too much carried away, perhaps, by whim or impulse, to practise the conventional tones, and gestures, and style of expression, that constitute elegance ; there is, however, a loftiness in the carriage of her head—a certain conscious, though careless, air of superiority in her general deportment, that shows she would know how to assert her pretensions, both of station and intellect, if questioned, with becoming dignity. And, after all, dear aunt, as she does not require adventitious aids, to impress strangers in her favour, why should she condescend to employ them !"

" You are quite *éblouie*, I perceive," said Miss Fennell, with a smile.

" While you retain all your philosophic calmness : that English composure of yours is most provoking."

" Why, the aunt happens to be a few years

older than the niece, certainly, to say nothing of other reasons which might render her less likely to fall in love, with either man or woman, at first sight. Do not imagine, however, that I am insensible to Miss Whaley's good and agreeable qualities; for even a first visit has disclosed both—she being one of those who wear their heart on their sleeve. It is an impolitic fashion, though, for no human heart is without its plague-spot, more or less unsightly. Now, Rose, don't look as if you were going to run a tilt at me, in defence of your ladye-love. I don't mean to accuse her of anything monstrous. I admire her candour, her warm-heartedness, her generosity, her mental endowments. But, on the other hand, it strikes me that she exercises the liberty of judging and acting for herself in rather too decided a way, for so young a woman. And although I should be far from saying that she courted singularity, I certainly am of opinion she does not sufficiently endeavour to avoid it.

You remember the maxim of your old friend, Ganganelli, 'La donna saggia sfugge di farsi notare a dito.' She has been spoiled by circumstances, I think."

"Spoiled!" exclaimed Rose, warmly. Oh, no, that she certainly is not."

"Well, injured, then, or injuriously influenced, if you like that mode of expression better. As an only child, and an heiress, she would have required such an education as might tend in some degree to counterbalance the evil consequences of adoration at home, adulation abroad; in a word, she would have required a religious education. Religious, however, not in name only, but in fact; where the pupil should see precept brought into daily exercise, and be made to feel the beauty and harmony of action resulting from the love of God and of his creatures; and not afterwards hear, as too often happens, those who, in the morning lecture, have extolled the meek and lowly spirit, as one above price, evincing, by conduct

during the day, how little they are under its influence; and while exhorting the young disciple to lay all at the foot of the cross, taking him up in spirit to the pinnacle of the temple, and showing him all the kingdoms of the earth, and the glory of them; condemning, in words, pride and ambition, and yet, by their own example and conversation, encouraging the pride of intellect, and, what is worse, the pride of station; thus proving, as far as in them lies, the insufficiency of the doctrine they preach—exhibiting practice and profession in opposition, God and mammon striving for the mastery, and, alas! mammon but too often obtaining it. What could such instruction as this avail? Of course, no human argument, however ingeniously framed, not even that most powerful of all arguments, a consistent life, can do more than indicate to their fellow-men the right way—they cannot compel them to enter upon it. No; the fire that descends on the altar of our hearts, there to

consume the sacrifice—a costly and a painful one, for it is the sacrifice of those cherished sins that are to us as the apple of our eye—that purifying, vivifying flame must be lighted by God himself. Unfortunately, however, as yet Clara Whaley has no other rule of life than her own tastes and feelings; but, sooner or later, this stubborn will must be brought to bend beneath a mighty hand. How strange afflictions will seem to her—the idolized child, the flattered heiress, the high-spirited woman; but yet the day may not be far distant when she, too, will cry, 'It is good for me to have been afflicted.' Few of us are drawn by mercies, dear Rose. Like the air we breathe, or the sunshine in which we bask, it never occurs to us—so much do we become accustomed to them—that they are gifts resumable at pleasure. We are rich; but what is there remarkable in that? Our wealth has been acquired by our own exertions, or inherited from our fathers; we do not, surely, owe gra-

titude on that account. Are we blessed with health? Wherefore not?—we have never done anything to impair our constitution. Are we surrounded by beloved friends? We were born into that particular family, and, of course, they love us, and we love them—what can be more natural? We never call any of these possessions God's mercies, though, whenever they come to be withdrawn, we exclaim against the removal, as if the Almighty Giver had no right to his own, and that we have been treated with absolute injustice."

The conversation was here interrupted by a summons to attend Miss Whaley, who was waiting in her carriage at the gate.

In a few moments, the party was seated, and soon afterwards, borne rapidly on their way.

"Formerly, this far West of ours was known to strangers by the general name of Connamara; however, of late years, Iar Connaught and Joyce Country have come in for the honor

of distinctive appellations. With respect to the former, indeed, owing as it does, its chief attraction (with the exception of its magnificent lough), to the glorious Twelve Pins of Connamara, so called, from their sharp peaks, or to the splendid groups of Joyce country, I don't consider it to have been so ill used ; but to think of Joyce Country having been all this time unknown to fame, is really, too bad." "The character of the scenery," she proceeded, "although, to a certain extent, the same, in these two rival districts, is yet sufficiently diversified to afford a fair subject of comparison. In Connamara, the traveller finds himself in an extensive plain, bounded, on one side, by a range of lofty, rugged mountains, that seem drawn up like a file of giant soldiers to do him homage, and accompany him on his way ; on the other, by a chain of lakes, varying in size, and not a few possessing eminent beauty.— There is one more especially, with a fine old castle in the midst, and a group of the highest

and wildest of the Twelve Pins towering over it, in savage grandeur, that I should like to steal for my own dear district—and then, Connamara can boast of Clifden, of which, almost every lover of the picturesque has heard; and which none who have seen, can ever forget. Neither should I omit the magnificent harbours of Connamara, as forming another distinction, justly her due. Of Joyce Country, I shall say nothing, lest I should forestal your pleasure. At present, you are in Iar Connaught, remember."

After a drive of some twelve or fourteen miles, the travellers reached the romantic village of Outerard, that, in any other country, would be made the very prettiest of pretty villages, set in a frame-work of mountains, with its clear, sparkling stream undulating through it, so gracefully flowing—the very *beau ideal* of rurality. Hereabouts too, Lough Corrib discloses some of its richest scenes. Beautiful Corrib!—its sea-like expanse, stud-

ded with clustering islets, that equal in number the days of the year, and bordered by houses that glitter in the sun's rays ; these islets and shores were once the resort of the hermit and the chief—but the abbeys and the castles are now mouldering in ruins, and so are the hearts of those who once dwelt in them—the strife with nature and with fortune is at length over. Who can behold those ivy-covered towers, once the stronghold of power or of turbulence, thus brought to nought, and not feel his own aspirations after wordly distinction checked and rebuked?—And those moss-grown bones that strew the earth, can we look upon them, and not take thought of the day when all that remains of our mortality shall be trodden under foot, as theirs is by us?—But that portion of us which never dies, where will it be then?

Then, as now, fair Corrib, you will still shine forth in loveliness—for lovely you must always be—whether in your smooth and smil-

ing face are reflected bright colours and beautiful forms, or whether some angry spirit of the mountain, breathing on the fair surface, curls it into mimic rage. But those can alone estimate your surpassing loveliness, who have followed you to your birthplace, and wound a way into the heart of these blue hills, gathered together, as it were, to watch over and protect it ; and as the pleasure-boat advances, cautiously treading its path through the narrow meandering labyrinth of waters, the immovable hills seem to change places, and assume different shapes, according as their different points are intercepted or brought into view, and as summits hitherto retreating, as it were, from observation, come slyly forward. The blasts, too, which sweep down from them with the suddenness and rapidity of lightning, by adding the excitement of danger to the other elements of the romantic, not a little contributes to the effect of the scene. In the fury of these blasts there is something so like *malice pre-*

pense, that any one imbued with poetical associations might, with a slight stretch of imagination, consider them as the spiteful efforts of the guardian divinity—the *Deus loci*—to deter the prying curiosity which would seek to invade his wild recesses; but who, not being gifted with the power of raising such a storm as should engulph the frail bark, can only succeed by the frequency and unexpectedness of his attack. He seems to grind his teeth, and puff his cheeks, in all the impotence of rage, as the boat, guided by skilful hands, passes on its course, bidding defiance to his assaults. It runs by the promontory of Doon, rising abruptly from the water's edge, with its rugged, overhanging crags, and anchors in safety at Kishla-na-Kirka—romantic site of a romantic legend.

At about ten miles from the village of Outerard, our party entered Joyce Country.

The road wound through a narrow pass, closed in by mountains, gathering into majestic

groups, in a certain graceful confusion—the head of one, as it were, looking over the shoulders of the other, flat-topped, and green from base to summit—the scene is pastoral as well as grand. Turns of the road were perpetually bringing new combinations of beauty into view, as new forms, emerging and occupying the foreground, forced the others to recede. After winding for some miles through these hills, a turn of the road suddenly brought them to a point which called forth expressions of surprise and admiration. Killery harbour, that magnificent inlet of the ocean, lighted by a summer sunset, lay before them, smiling in calm loveliness; the verdant hills, rising from its deep waters, imparting to it rather the character of an inland lake than an arm of the fierce Atlantic; while over and around it, mountain towered over mountain, until the view was closed by a distant blue outline.

The road, running along a cliff which skirted the sea, and overhung by gigantic

hills, brought them to the point where they were to cross over to the opposite shore

Here they found a barge of Mr. Whaley's in attendance.

"How I like the deep-toned, guttural language and dark countenances of your boatmen!" observed Rose; "so much in keeping—if I may use that hacknied expression—with the scene. And, oh! what a glorious scene that is!" she exclaimed, clasping her hands in the enthusiasm of her admiration — "a scene so fraught with images of power and beauty, that one might fancy this sea of glass, these green, overhanging mountains, had been but just called into being, fresh from the creating hand. I don't wonder that you are what you are, Miss Whaley; for after all, must not majestic objects and associations possess a moral influence? Who could be mean or frivolous here? Here, amid the solitary grandeur of nature, when the veil which the spirit of the world throws over our perceptions is drawn

aside, and we see things as they are—the petty concerns of mortality—its troubles—its mortifications—shrink into nothing. Elsewhere," she added, smiling, "Rose Dillon might be tempted to envy Miss Whaley, but not here; she loses sight of the distinctions of society. Man seems nothing—God, everything!"

"Yes—to those who happen to have a heart, or an understanding to feel or to think," rejoined Clara; "otherwise, sea, sky, and hill may be visited or dwelt among in vain. Imagine what I have suffered, when doing the honors, by a party of tittering misses and fashionable gentlemen; to hear them talking of the inanities of the last London season, amidst the glories of nature! Absolute desecration—was it not?—scarcely to be exceeded by a valse in the Colosseum, or a pic-nic at Pompeii—where, upon one occasion, as I can testify, the ladies all fell asleep, and the gentlemen got tipsy! But, as there is a time and a place for all things, so are there persons fitted to the time and suited

to the place. I don't therefore suppose that our interest in one another will be diminished, because we shall commune on mountain-tops, rather than in the busy haunts of men ; and that our intimacy shall have been cemented—not amidst the artificial garlands of the ball-room, listening to its gay and giddy music, but amidst the beauty and fragrance of living flowers, lulled by the harmonies of nature. I cannot but think that our recollection of one another, hallowed by association with what is grand or touching in the works of God, will be more likely to endure, than if connected with the frivolities of society. When taking my solitary walk, hereafter, amid these scenes, I think you will be brought to my remembrance, pleasingly associated with them ; and will you not, on your part, when floating on the tide of life, borne along, I hope, by a fair current, revert to the days you will have passed in the wild West, with one who may then be far distant—perhaps dead—and forgotten ?"

" Forgotten !" repeated Rose, in a tone of

deep feeling; "do you think it possible that any who ever knew, could forget you?"

"We must reserve that question for further discussion," Clara replied, with a smile, as, springing ashore, she led the way to a light, open carriage, which was waiting for them at a short distance from the village where they had landed.

They now proceeded through a deep glen, which narrowed seemingly to a point at its extremity, where the view was so completely blocked up by mountains, that, as Rose remarked, "they might fancy themselves travellers in one of those fabled regions of enchantment, whence all egress is forbidden"—for, whichever way the eye turned—before, behind, and around—except towards the sea—and a turn in the road soon hid that object from view—they were hemmed in by mountains. While passing along their base, Rose almost shrank, as she looked upwards, as if expecting the enormous masses to give way, and

overwhelm them. But the shadows on the hills, that supplied, in some sort, the want of wood—the deep blue haze which softened, without obscuring the towering summits of the distant mountains—and the rich green of those which were nearer, conveying ideas of pasturage and cultivation—tended, in a degree, to relieve the scene of its exuberance of sublimity.

And now the woods of Ballymagawley, sweeping up the sides of the lofty mountains in its immediate neighbourhood, began to be discernible. But the fine tall trees dwindled into mere twigs, when presented to an eye accustomed, for any length of time, to a landscape, the features of which were on a gigantic scale. On a nearer approach, however, as the road led through groves, the song of birds sounded so cheerily on the ear, that Rose was less disappointed than she expected to be, at finding the view intercepted.

A sudden turn to the left brought Ballymagawley into sight, standing on a lawn, which

sloped down to a small, but very pretty lake, that lay nestling at the foot of the huge form that overhung it. At the rere of the house towered another hill, of which, however, all but the summit was hidden by intervening plantations.

Ballymagawley, to an architectural eye, presented nothing to distinguish it from other modern Irish country houses. In one respect, alone, it differed from its predecessors and its contemporaries—it was contented to be a modern Irish house, not aspiring, either in title or appearance, to the honour of castellation.

Having conducted our travellers thus far, we will leave them to recover from the fatigue, and talk over the pleasures, of their journey.

CHAPTER XI.

BEFORE Rose had been many days Miss Whaley's guest, she felt so much confidence in her kindness as to communicate, during one of their mountain walks together, the motives which had prompted her visit to Ireland.

Clara entered into the subject with all the depth of feeling to be expected from her benevolence, and all the eagerness of a romantic temper, suddenly presented with an object upon which to exercise its love of the adventurous.

Miss Whaley was not romantic, in the ordinary sense of the word; that is to say, she would have hesitated to break her father's heart, by eloping with some partner at a ball.

Her's was the romance of a sympathising, not of a selfish character. She could be occupied by other people's concerns, without perpetually connecting them, under some form or other, with her own. She could delight in imagining Rose's meeting with a long-lost and interesting brother (for she, too, gave the reins to her fancy on this topic), without settling he was to fall in humble adoration at her feet, or puzzling herself about the exact phrase in which to convey her rejection of his suit.

"When papa returns, he will be able, perhaps, to throw some light on those letters you speak of," observed Clara, as, accompanied by Rose, she was returning homewards one day; "meanwhile, I shall endeavour to obtain information about Pegsheen Sullivan. A woman of that name lives not far from us, respecting whom there exists a curious superstition. She is believed to be a Changeling; and preternatural powers are attributed to her, from her supposed connexion with the elfin race, or, as

they are here called, with classical insincerity, 'the good people;' and her wandering mode of life, for weeks, nay months, at a time, tends to keep up this illusion. One can easily imagine that the solitude and isolation of her lot from infancy—for even the parents looked with aversion on the fairy child—has not been without effect on her naturally unsteady mind, and that the unearthly sights and sounds which she describes to her credulous auditors, are not altogether the invention of an imposture. I speak, however, only from conjecture, not knowing anything personally of her; for, from some cause I never could fathom, she has always avoided me, and Ballymagawley is, I believe, the only house, for miles around, which is not visited by her."

"Oh, how curious and interesting such a story appears to me! What, if this strange creature should be the very person we are seeking. Her locomotive propensity makes it not impossible."

"I am not at all inclined, however, to think that it ever carried her so far as England. I rather think such an event as that would be considered too important, to have been omitted in the catalogue of Pegsheen's marvellous adventures."

"Yet it might, by some chance, have escaped notice. Suppose we ask your butler, who knows everything and everybody, what he thinks of the matter?"

"Shall you have patience, though, to follow our good friend, Considine, through the mazes of his entangled narrative and interminable digressions?"

"Oh, yes! With such an object in view, my patience is not likely to fail. Besides, I delight in Mr. Considine's colloquial exhibitions."

"You happen, too, to see him just now in his glory. The caution he received on entering our service never to allude to his former master, Evan O'Halloran, in papa's presence,

considerably restrains his flow of conversation: the various events of his own life, and those of his different masters, being so curiously jumbled together in his own mind, that he cannot contrive to talk of any unless he may talk of all. What think you of coming at once in search of him?"

They had not proceeded very far, when their steps were attracted towards the housekeeper's room, by the sound of voices, raised somewhat more loudly, in altercation, than beseemed the dignified decorum of Ballymagawley.

"Considine is, as usual, I suppose, pressing advice on Mrs. Larkin; and Mrs. Larkin, as usual, rejecting it, with all her might and main," Clara observed. "Between these two worthies there does not subsist, you must know, all the cordiality their mutual friends and admirers could desire. Mr. Considine pluming himself upon the knowledge and experience he has acquired by travelling in

various countries, and residing in various families, despises Mrs. Larkin as a home-spun; while she, on her part, though ostentatiously rejoicing that she was too well off at home, to want to better herself by going abroad, and that she never was in any service but the one, is inclined rather to look with a jealous eye on the influence possessed by the travelled Mr. Considine, over king, lords, and commons, in this our state of Ballymagawley; for Considine is as much regarded by the higher powers for his integrity, as by the others for his wisdom."

Miss Whaley's tap at the door was unheeded by the disputants within.

"Don't attempt to give me any of your impidence," cried a sharp female voice; "don't offer to attempt it; for I won't put up with impidence from you, or the likes of you: a common rover of your kind—a poor, mane, sneaking spy! I'll tell you what, my man, I'll ——"

But the coming abjuration was stopped by Miss Whaley's entrance.

"What is all this noise about?"

Mrs. Larkin applied her handkerchief to her eyes, and looked the very picture of patient, defenceless, oppressed womanhood; while Mr. Considine, having removed the pipe from his mouth, stood erect in all the gravity and composure of manly importance.

"You are seldom backward at talking, Considine," said his young mistress, impatiently. "Do give an answer to my question."

"All the privication in life, miss, I gave Mrs. Larkin, was just this—says I, 'Mrs. Larkin, you use a power more sugar and brandy for them preserves than is wanting,' says I. 'Much you know about it,' says she. 'I do know a great deal about it,' says I, 'and so I ought, for I was in the country where the sugar is made,' that's in the West Ingies, miss; 'and where the brandy is made, too,' says I; 'and, by course, I ought to know

more about the matter than you can, Mrs. Larkin,' says I, 'that was never out of Ireland, and saw very little of that same,' says I."

"God forgive you!" ejaculated Mrs. Larkin, in a low, subdued voice: "the Lord forgive you, for a foul-tongued, evil-spoken, backbitin', desaving man! To say that I, that was brought up in the family, that attended your darling mamma in her dying sickness," she added, turning to Miss Whaley, "and laid her out, would go rob ye! Me to forget the time that I was child's-maid to you, Miss Clara, honey, and that you used to be so fond of, and would bring me pudding out of the parlour, and scratch and bite me when I wouldn't run races with you in the lawn; and the care I used to take of you the time you had the hooping-cough. 'Tis you was the good-natured child, sure enough, that never told on me when I put the blisther instead of the warm plasther on you, and had like to kill

you with too much of the cough-bottle;—to say I robbed, in regard of the presarves. And oh, Avoch! that I should live to see the day that Miss Clara would think worse of a common sarvant, of *his* description, than of me, a follower of the family from the creation of man!"

And hereupon exit Mrs. Larkin, in a paroxysm of grief and indignation.

"Well, that bates Banagher!" exclaimed Mr. Considine. "But sure, if the cap fits, let her wear it. I don't say, though, that she robbed the family: I'd be very sorry to say anything so uncivil to her face—I have thravelled too much to do the like of that. All I said was, that it was robbing any family to waste their substance, and so I say still. Mr. Baker, of Baker's Hill, wouldn't have had his estate sold over his head, if he had 'a tuck my advice. I seen him plundered right and left, and I told him so; but he wouldn't believe a word I said. And I only made enemies for

myself, and done him no good, and so I had to quit the place. He had a very pretty woman to his wife, and afther he died in the marshalsea, she married the second time, one Counsellor Duffy; a very nice man he was—red in the face, and pock-marked, and had a nate property of his own in the county Clare. I had an aunt married to a man who held a farm undher him: it was very good land, and he let it chape, out of compliment to me; for I knew Counsellor Duffy in regard of being married to Mrs. Baker that was; and he wanted me to settle down there, for he seen I was knowledgeable about land—and so I am, miss, knowledgeable about everything. 'No, sir,' says I, 'I never wish to have more land than what will answer to lay my four bones in,' says I. So with that he laughed. 'You are not fond of farming, I see, Consisidine,' says he. 'No, sir,' says I; 'I have too great an inclination for thravelling and seeing the world, to like farming, sir.' 'There's

a friend of mine, an officer, looking out for a servant, and he's under orders for foreign service, would you like me to mention you?' 'I would, sir,' says I; 'nothing more.' That was the time of the Peninsular war, miss, an' I went to live with Captain O'Brien, of the 44th—a fine, handsome ——"

"A fine, handsome man," interrupted Clara, who had listened with some impatience to the foregoing long speech; "yes, you have told me all that before. But I want to ask you a question. I want to know are you well acquainted with Pegsheen Sullivan—Pegsheen na Shiogh, you know?"

"Is it me, miss? There is not a man in the parish who could tell you more about Pegsheen Sullivan, than me, and about everybody in the country besides; for I know them better than the people who was bred and born here, though I'm not a native of the place, nor ever thought to come here once in my life, no more than to be thransported to Botany Bay.

In regard of being a Leinster man, and thinking Connaught such an uncivilized and ignorant place—and so it is, miss, very uncivilized and ignorant ;—but, for all that, I might have come to a worse place, as I was saying one day to Mr. Evan O'Halloran—'Sir,' says I——"

"Well, never mind what you said to Mr. Evan O'Halloran, but tell me what you know of Pegsheen O'Sullivan."

"To tell you the truth, miss, I don't know much that's good of her : egg and bird, she has been saucy and mischievous, and will be so to her dying day. It was only a fortnight ago she was the occasion of John, the groom, getting the greatest fall ever he got. He seen her one night, very late, prowling about, and called after her, and bid her get out of that ; for he thought she'd steal something—he being an Englishman, and not used to the place ; and when she didn't do his bidding, he ran after her to chastise her, and it happened his

foot slipped in the dark, and he fell, and hurted himself severely ; and she set up a screech of laughter you'd hear at the pass of Salruck, just out of spite."

"I was under an impression that she never came to Ballymagawley, and often wondered what could be the reason," Miss Whaley observed.

"She would come in it often enough, and too often maybe, only for the dread she has of the master. The minute she lays eyes on him, away with her flying like mad, and no one can tell why ; for he never spoke a cross word, or lifted his hand to her. But, for all that, of an odd time, she comes stealing into the little churchyard at the foot of the hill there, convanient to the lake, where Mr. Evan O'Halloran is buried, and the rest of the O'Hallorans sence the foundation of the world. That's a great resort of her's ; and 'tisn't for any good she goes in it either, I'll be bound. I often heerd the terriblest noises out of that churchyard

ever I heerd. And the night the old master died—your grandpapa, miss—if ever the banshee cried, she cried that night, mourning over the defalcation of the family. And Denis Sullivan, Mr. Evan's foster-brother, told me he'd take his book oath, he seen, the same time, a figure, in the moonlight, of an ould woman, with her gown tucked over head, rocking herself backwards and forwards, sitting on a tombstone; but as I knew Denis to be an ignorant man that had never travelled, I took care to investigate him very close. 'Denis,' says I ——"

"The next time you see Pegsheen," interrupted Miss Whaley, "tell her I wish to speak with her."

"Oh, then, the less you spake with Pegsheen Sullivan, and the less communication you have with her in any way, the better. I often told Mr. Evan O'Halloran so, but he wouldn't take my advice, and all the world seen what come of it. He was the only one in the whole coun-

try, far and near, that shown her any good-nature, excepting what they might do out of fear; for, young as she was, people dreaded her for an evil-minded, mischievous little girl; and when he would be giving frocks and fairings to Denis Sullivan's other children, he would give her the same, and often beg her off from a beating; and I seen him many a time stroking her head, and making free with her. Them that meddles with her, or the likes of her, either in enmity or friendship, will find themselves the worse for it in the latter end. You may depend on that, miss."

"I am surprised, Considine, you can believe such superstitious nonsense."

"Nonsense, miss? Oh, I beg your pardon, 'tis no nonsense—quite the contrary. But I ask you, miss, if Pegsheen Sullivan wasn't something out-of-the-way, wouldn't she have grown like any one else, instead of remaining, these twenty years, the same size she was at twelve years of age, and that time she was no

bigger than a rasonable child of four years old? And as for superstition, miss, I defy any man in Europe to be less superstitious than me. You will never find a man that has travelled superstitious. There's people in the country here would believe anything, but I amn't so; for I would believe nothing but what I thought rasonable and proper; and if all the priests in the kingdom, and the pope himself at the head of them, was to bid me believe what I didn't choose myself, I wouldn't do it for them. It does all very well for people that hasn't seen what I seen in the four quarters of the habitable globe, to be dictated to in regard of their belief. But then, miss, on the other hand, 'tis no use for a man to be saying he won't believe what every one is telling him, and proving to be the truth. Now, miss, Pegsheen Sullivan's aunt told me, that she was born as fine a babby as you could see—that's the one that was stole, and that she was put in the place of. Well, miss, she came in

one day to mind the child, while the mother was out, and what should she see, miss, but it sitting up in the cradle with the face of an old crone, wrinkled all over, and as yallow as goold. And only for me the Sullivans would have been hung all along of the same child; for some ignorant people wanted them, right or wrong, to twist the neck of it with a pair of tongs. Them sort counts that a great charm. And Mrs. O'Halloran came to hear of it, and she was said by me, and ordhered them on no account to touch the child—'Because,' says she, 'Considine tells me the law coorts would bring it in murder,' says she; and so they would, not a doubt of it, miss. If I had been bred to learning, I'd have made the finest counsellor Ireland ever saw."

"And have you really a belief in fairies, Mr. Considine?" asked Rose, curious to know something of the popular notions on the subject.

"Not a superstitious belief, Miss; but you see, ladies, them that has travelled don't know

rightly what to say in regard of the like; for when I come home from the West Ingies, where me and Mr. Robertson was, at the head of the commission that went out there to settle the laws of the nagroes—they didn't settle them properly though, as I told Mr. Robertson at the time. They were for emancipation, and so was I too—only I would have done it a different way, and saved the country a power of money. But I never lived with a more headstrong man than Mr. Robertson; whatever he took into his head he would follow, no matter where it might lade him—and Mr. Smyth, the second commissioner, was just such another as himself, and so they done it all their own way, and have botched the business. But as I was saying, when I come home here, and told the people the things I seen there, they would not believe me.—When I told them that men was sold there like cows and horses, and that they had black skins, and woolly heads; and then, when I described what they used to ate, and

how they'd be dressed, and made a description of the country—how one would be poisoned by serpents, and ate up with flies, I could only see by their manner, they did not always believe what I said, and so that makes me very cautious not be stubborn in regard of what other people tells me they seen."

"That shews your sense," observed Clara, "but ——"

"Oh, by Jove, Miss, you wouldn't find a more sensible man than me anywhere, if you were to sarch through the three kingdoms. If Captain O'Brien had been said by me, he would have been alive to-day. He was a fine, clever, handsome gentleman—and good right he had to be so; for his mother was the beautifullest woman ever I laid eyes on, and his father the same. Captain O'Brien was the handsomest man ever I seen, except Mr. Evan O'Halloran. They were second cousins—very like in the face, only Captain O'Brien wasn't so dark-complexioned as Mr. Evan—and stooped in the shoulders."

Clara, who thought it advisable to let him have his story out, did not interrupt him, and he proceeded—

"But, before or sence, I never seen the equal of Mr. Evan—from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot, there wasn't a fault to be found; him and me was the one size, and as like as two pays—and I had good reason to know, for I was living with him as own man, going on seven years from the time I left Captain O'Brien, who sent me with a letter to him, after his death, to the day Mr. Evan was killed himself, and he would have been to the good now, if he had turned back, as I wanted him, that morning. I was draming all night of Pegsheen Sullivan, and a poor, miserable creature, a beggar woman, they called Moya Ruagh—well, I didn't think much of that, for I never was one to give in to drames like another, and so I went early to call him in the morning, according to his orders over night, as he was to go out shooting. The first

thing him and me seen, when we went out of the door, with his gun on his shoulder, was Moya Ruagh standing outside. Well, miss, this seemed to me very strange entirely, and I wanted him to turn back. 'You will have no sport to-day, sir,' said I, passing it off in a common remark; 'for you know a red-haired woman always brings bad luck,' says I. 'No woman ever brought bad luck to me,' says he. 'Give Moya a tenpenny'—there was no shillings in them days, miss—'and maybe I wouldn't have the worse sport,' says he. 'Take care, sir,' says I, 'that bad sport is all that will happen you; who knows but the gun might burst, or some other misfortune come across you.' But away he went, himself and Mr. Whaley, laughing and whistling to the dogs, and followed by Denis Sullivan, with the bags and other combustibles. I never seen him alive afterwards. And the first person that come screeching up the avenue, to bring the bad news, was Pegsheen Sullivan. What do you

think of that, miss? Well, 'tis all past and gone now; but Mr. Evan O'Halloran would have been alive to-day, and so would Captain O'Brien, if they had not been so determined in their own minds. Captain O'Brien was coorting a lady in London, one time, and she had a power of money, and was a nice, genteel girl, though not very handsome, living with an aunt in Grosvenor-square. The old lady did not much like the Irish, so she gave me and Captain O'Brien the cold shoulder. But I wouldn't let him mind that, because I seen by the love letthers the young one used to write, and the picture she sent by her own maid—a very pretty girl she was, and uncommon fond of me—that everything was going on well. So I picked out of the maid one day—for she would tell me anything, and offered to go mass if I'd marry her, and she had three hundred pounds to her fortune; but I had no very great laning to matrimony at the time, nor haven't had since ayther. So she

told me the aunt would be out of town on a certain day, and Miss Jenkins—that was the young lady's name—would be alone by herself. So when I come home, I said to Captain O'Brien—'Sir,' says I, 'now is your time; make hay while the sun shines. Miss Jenkins will be at home to-morrow; and let me see, sir,' says I, 'that you don't go on shilly-shallying any longer, but settle the business smart out of hand at onst,' says I. 'What do you mane by settling the business?' says he. 'I mane, sir,' says I, 'making her come up with us to Scotland to-morrow night.' 'Oh,' Considine, I couldn't do that,' says he. 'Why not, sir,' says I?' 'At laste not in such a hurry,' says he. 'Oh, by Jove, sir,' says I, 'things of the sort are always done in a hurry, or they are never done at all. Mind what I say, if she don't come with us to-morrow, devil a foot ever she'll come, you'll see!' 'I'm very short of money,' says he. 'If you are itself,' says I, 'you have enough, at any rate, to take you

to the blacksmith ; and you can write to your cousin, Mr. Evan O'Halloran'—not that I knew anything of Mr. Evan then, only what I heerd from Captain O'Brien himself—'and he will lend you what you want, I'll engage ; for he knows what it is to be hard up himself sometimes,' says I, 'as well as another.' That time, miss, Mr. Evan was leading a very wild life ; but when I come to live with him, he changed entirely for the betther, and grew very sober and discreet, at least in comparison of what he was. The old master was very eager to get him married, in regard of being trusting to him ; for he had nothing but daughters beside. But Mr. Evan wasn't that way inclined, no more than myself; but I told him not to take pattern by me, for him and me was different. 'I believe you are right, Considine,' says he—that's Captain O'Brien I mean, miss. 'Oh, by Jove, sir,' says I, 'you may take your oath of that ; I never was wrong yet, nor ever will, plaze God,' says I.

'Every identical thing I say, sir, is sure to come thrue.' So he went to see Miss Jenkins, and I had a carriage-and-four waiting, pretty late in the evening, at the corner of the square; but there was only a pair of horses to it at the time—the others were harnessed, ready to put-to at a minute's warning—for fear would any one be remarking. So I was in the carriage with pistols, primed and loaded, ready cocked and all, to shoot whoever would make any opposition; and it's well but I shot Captain O'Brien himself, when he came to the carriage-window in the dark. 'Is Miss Jenkins with you, sir?' says I. 'Oh, no,' says he, 'I thought it best to wait till to-morrow.' 'You have no sperrit, sir,' says I. ''Tisn't the faint heart will ever win the fair lady. You have lost your chance, sir,' says I, 'and there's no help for it now, but to look out for another heiress, and mind your hand next time.' So with that he got into a great passion, and cursed and swore as if he was out of his mind,

and threatened to shoot me, and what not. Well, miss, the next morning the old lady came back quite unexpected, and heard all from one of the footmen, who had a grudge against me on account of the lady's maid; and so she whisked Miss Jenkins out of town, and turned the maid off. And two months afterwards I seen her marriage in the papers, to an officer of the Coldstream Guards, who was neither as good-looking, nor of as good a family as Captain O'Brien. And so when he seen it was all over, he went to join his regiment in Spain, and was killed there. And if he had took my advice, and ran away with Miss Jenkins, that would not have happened him."

"Why, do you suppose the cannon-balls would have respected the husband of an heiress, more than another man?" said Miss Whaley.

"Oh, he needn't have anything to do with the like, miss. He could have left the army, and come home, and lived on his property."

"And would you have advised your master

to leave his profession while war was going on, Considine?"

"By Jove, miss, that's the time a sinsible man ought to lave it." And Mr. Considine gave a little hard, dry laugh, such as a parrot might give.

"But a brave man, Considine—would he do so?"

"I am as brave a man myself, miss, as any in Europe, and I never had any fancy for war. To my mind, it's the foolishest thing ever any man done, to be venturing his own life, and taking other people's, in a quarrel that does not concern him, and never have lave to spake or look, but by word of command—besides the prospect of being chopped up, and made mince-meat of in the hospitals, by the doctors. 'Twas the doctors was the instigation of Captain O'Brien's death. They wanted, right or wrong, to cut his leg off, but I wouldn't let them, nor he ayther—he was said by me, for onst in his life. Now, miss, nothing will ever

persuade me, but that, out of spite, they gave something to put him out of the way—for he took very bad, and died of a raging faver, in less than no time ; and he would have gone off sooner even than he did, but for me, who used to bring him wine and broth under the rose—for they forbid him to taste a drop of aythe one or the other, keeping what ought to be for the use of the hospital, to entertain company in their own quarters. I told Dr. Malone, the assistant-surgeon of the regiment, that I laid Captain O'Brien's death at his door, and would report him to the Medical Board—and so I did ; but I got no satisfaction—all lagued together ! I always thought doctors the greatest impostures in the world, but I never seen it proved properly, till I went to Spain under the Duke of Wellington. The wounds that were of no signification, and that would heal of themselves, they cured by coorse ; but if it wasn't so, they would be sure to let a man slip through their fingers, the way they done Captain O'Brien, if he wouldn't let himself be cut up, like a sheep,

or a beef, to put money in their pockets; for they have so much upon every leg or arm they chop off, and that's as true as I'm standing here; for I heard it from a private of our regiment, that served his time to an apothecary in London, and listed on account of bad usage, and he told me—'Mr. Considine,' says he ——"

"Oh, never mind what the apothecary's-boy told you," said Miss Whaley, interrupting him, "I had rather hear you tell me something more about Pegsheen Sullivan. We may have some chance now, perhaps," she added in a whisper to Rose; "but, until he had buried Captain O'Brien, it was useless to expect he would speak on anything else—O'Brien, next to my poor uncle, being his favorite hero. Considine, can you tell me if Pegsheen was ever in England?"

"Is it Pegsheen Sullivan, Miss?—who in the world would take an ignorant creature of her description there?" And Mr. Considine drew himself up with a look of disdain.

"I should rather have asked, whether her

parents had been there—for Pegsheen herself was a child at the time I allude to."

"None of her family was ever out of the country, miss—you might aisy know it by their manners and conversation."

"But all people, you know, Considine, do not equally improve by the same opportunities. They might have travelled as far, little as they appear to have profited by it."

"If they had, miss, it could not have happened without my knowledge. Not a ha'porth occurs, far or near, that I don't hear of; and, one time, Denis Sullivan and I was very intimate—so far, at laste, as that, next to Mr. Evan, there wasn't a man on the face of the earth he thought so much of as me; and the night he died—God be merciful to him!—'twas me he got to spake for him to your papa, to get the loan of a coffin, and candles and whiskey for the wake. 'For you've more influence over him, Mr. Considine,' says he, 'than any man living—and so you ought,' says he, 'for

your aqual, for exparience and regularity of conduct, and everything a man ought to be, I never seen, Mr. Considine,' says he. These were the last words of Denis Sullivan, Mr. Evan's foster-brother, and he never held up his head after Mr. Evan died."

"But, although the parents remained stationary," said Miss Whaley, availing herself of a pause Mr. Considine made to take breath—"the girl, who had always a roving turn, might have wandered to England—she has been frequently as far as Dublin, I know."

"She has, miss, but she never went farther; I'd take my oath of that, or I'd hear it, to a certainty."

"We are quite at fault here," Rose observed, with a sigh. "My hypothesis of fairy agency falls to the ground, I perceive, and, in all probability, so will every other I take up in its stead—I am doomed, I believe, to disappointment."

"What! discouraged already—at the very

outset of our undertaking!" exclaimed Clara. "Fie!—you are not fit for a *demoiselle errante!* Besides, if you recollect, I did not lead you to expect much from our inquiries in this quarter."

"Did you chance to hear, Considine," she proceeded, after a pause, "of any other person of the name of Peggy Sullivan, having been in England when a child?"

"There is plenty of the name, but never one that was in England, miss."

"Oh, somebody of that name positively was there, who disappeared suddenly, about twenty years ago, from a village in the neighbourhood of Blackheath, with a little boy, brother to a friend of mine—to Miss Dillon, in fact—on whose account I am very anxious to trace the woman."

"If you never heard of your brother since, miss, you have but a poor chance of finding him now. The gipsies is very plentiful thereabouts, and most likely sold him long ago to

the sweeps, or put him aboord a man-of-war, or educated him as a picket; and there would be no saying what end he might have come to — thransported for life, maybe, or worse, as mostly happens to the like of them stray children. I was at an execution, one time, of a man for murther, and he said, in his last dying speech ——"

"For God's sake, stop," exclaimed Rose, shuddering.

"Why, miss, all I want is to make your mind asy, so you wouldn't be disappointed in your expectations; for 'tis out of all reason and exparience, to suppose ever you'll see your brother again, dead or alive, in this world, when you didn't swear informations, and get out warrants at the time. Mr. Halworthy, an English gentleman I lived with, after leaving Mr. Evan O'Halloran, lost as fine a little boy as you'd wish to see, that was stole by the surgeons, the time of the burking; and I wouldn't be a bit surprised if your brother, miss, was

served the same way ; or he might have been brought to one of the ating-houses in the city of London, that dales in children, and makes mutton-pies of them. No saying, for that matter, what end Master Dillon might come to."

"You are determined, it appears, to make an end of Master Dillon in some way or other, at any rate," observed Miss Whaley. "My dear Rose, you have already had enough of these horrors, I perceive," she added, turning to her guest, whose pale cheek fully justified the observation. "Suppose we adjourn to our rooms, and prepare for dinner, before Considine's frightful suppositions—given out, by the way, without a single change of voice or countenance—shall have taken away all appetite for it."

The subject which had engrossed the friends all the morning, continued to furnish forth abundant materials for the evening. The interview with Considine, and its unsatisfactory results, having been duly reported to Miss

Fennell, she suggested the possibility of a mistake on the part of that important personage, notwithstanding his universal knowledge of what everybody did, said, and thought. It was, therefore, at length decided that the young ladies should seek out the widow Sullivan, and, without further loss of time, ascertain the fact upon which they were desirous of obtaining information.

"Even if nothing should come of our expedition," said Clara, "your curiosity at least will have been gratified by seeing this Pegsheen, who seems to have taken such hold of your imagination."

CHAPTER XII.

At an early hour the following morning, Miss Whaley's pony-phaeton was in readiness, and she and her guest set off in high spirits. A short drive through the same valley by which, a fortnight previously, they had reached Ballymagawley, brought them again to the same village where, upon that occasion, they had landed.

Miss Whaley threw the reins to a servant, and addressing Rose, said :—

"Here we must abandon mother earth, and commit ourselves to the awful deep, as your admirer, the captain, would say. The boat, I see, is already waiting for us, and a group gathered round it, as is usual, indeed, when-

ever the high and puissant lady of Ballymagawley appears among her lieges. You will hear them pour forth as many prayers for her preservation as if she was about to depart in quest of the north-west passage. Alas! for the shillings and sixpences she will have to dispense in return. Oh, the penalties of greatness! But I must be serious," she added, "and enact my part with all the dignity thereunto belonging."

And, followed by Miss Dillon, she led the way to the water's edge.

From every cabin in the village there issued, on an average, a dozen ragged urchins, who stood for a moment or two before their own doors, with mouth agape, shading their little bleared eyes from the splendour of the meridian sun, staring at "the quality;" and then started off in a body, shuffling and scuffling after them, followed by their several mothers, ostensibly to slap them into "manners," but perhaps not less desirous than their respec-

tive offspring, of coming in contact with the "young mistress—so easy to spake to, so ready to give."

Rose admired the patience with which the naturally impatient Clara listened to tedious complaints against disobliging or encroaching neighbours, or tyrannical agents' officials; and the kindness of word and look with which she accompanied assistance to those petitioning in favour of children to be clothed, or parents to be buried.

"I have a thousand apologies to make to you, dear Rose. At last, however, my levee is ended. Come, make haste," she added, turning to a person, whose trim boatman's attire bespoke him to be a nautical retainer. "Call Joyce, and let us be off at once. You know where we are going—don't you?"

"I do, your honour: over to the Pass of Salruck, there beyant, across the Bay. I know it well. But, in regard of Pat Joyce, he went, at the first light this morning, to the

funeral of a sister of his brother-in-law's, that lives convanient to Renvyle, and thought to be back in time agen you'd be wanting him; but I suppose, your honour, that ——"

"Oh, indeed, my honour can suppose it all quite well," interrupted Clara, angrily. "He has got drunk,* of course, and to-morrow or next day will come home with a broken head, and tell lies by the dozen, to excuse himself; and you will be ready to swear to everything he may choose to say. It would be acting more like a friend, Walsh, to keep him away altogether from such scenes."

"Oh, well, your honour, if a man doesn't go to his neighbour's funeral, he can't expect him to come to his, you know. Them that don't behave handsome at their friends' altars, won't have their friend behaving handsome at theirs. Pat Joyce has as good a right to expect a fine althar—God betune him and harum!—

* Father Mathew was not known in those days.

as e'er a man in the barony ; but how will he get respect paid himself, if he doesn't show it to his own people and friends he'd have up and down the country, now he's to the fore? Anyway, we are not trusting to him; for there's one here," he continued, pointing to an elderly man, whose dress of light-blue frieze designated him to be a native of the Isles of Arran. "Bartly Dirane, your honour, is as good a hand, every bit, as Pat Joyce, and thinks as bad of the family, in a manner, as ourselves, though he doesn't live on the lands ; and why not, wherein his wife nursed Masther Charless ? He will put you across, himself and me, in less than no time, your honour."

"Very well, only take care," said Clara, smiling, "that he is not just come from a funeral."

The crowd laughed, as all crowds do at the jest of a superior.

"God bless her !" cried one.

"Amen !" responded another. 'Tis always

aisy to pass her; if you done the worst in the world, no matter."

"Yes; and so pleasant and friendly," observed a third. "Isn't it quare, though, how she comes by it, and the father so dark and distant, that one dar'n't hardly draw one's breath before him? 'Tis afther Mr. Evan she takes—the heavens be his bed this day!"

The ladies and their attendants were, by this time, seated in the boat.

"Well, what is the matter now?" asked Clara, impatiently, for she perceived the two men whispering together, instead of putting off.

"Nothing, miss—nothing at all, only ——" and here Walsh stopped.

"Only what? Do speak out at once. The man doesn't know how to row, I suppose—is that it?"

"Is it me, your ladyship, not know how to row!" exclaimed the person alluded to. "Oh, then, that would be the quare thing entirely.

Me, that was bred and born, I may say, on the wather, and all my progeny before me, to the seventh generation !—me, an Arran man, and all ! You might as well doubt would a duck swim, your ladyship ;" and his fine, though weather-beaten, features glowed with consciousness of his own powers, not unmixed with astonishment at their having been, even for a moment, called in question.

" Well, then," said Clara, smiling at his earnestness, " what is the matter ?"

" I'll just tell your ladyship, out o' the face, what it was. At any rate it wasn't Tom Walsh's fault, but mine, if it should turn out that you would be displazed at the liberty I took. I never had much resort to quality—more especially, quality of ladies—and so I might aisy do or say something out-of-the-way, and never know it till it would be too late. But people tell me—knowledgeable people, your ladyship—that you, and the likes of you—raal tip-top grandees—are always the asiest to spake

to, by a simple, poor man of my sort; and so, your ladyship, I made bould to ax Tom Walsh, did he think your honourable ladyship would demane yourself so far as to let a dacent boy into the boat, along wid yourself and the other lady?—a stranger in the country he is, that's waiting since airly this morning to get across; going about—the crature—seeing what chance he'd have as a schoolmaster."

"Is that all? I have not the least objection," replied Miss Whaley, good-humouredly. "Call him, Walsh."

But Walsh was so busily engaged in what appeared an angry expostulation with the Arran man, that the order had to be repeated in a louder key, and a more authoritative manner.

"Is it the young man that come this morning, that's going along wid ye, miss?"

"Yes, yes; the person your friend Dirane is interested about—the schoolmaster," she added, observing that Walsh still continued to hesitate, and play with his oar, as if requiring

a more definite description. "Do you not understand?"

"Oh, I do, your honour. And so he is a schoolmasther—is he? Well, well, I never seen one has less the cut of a schoolmasther, than the same boy—at laste to my thinking; but, sure, if your honour thinks he has ——"

"How can I possibly tell anything about the matter?" interrupted Miss Whaley;—"don't you know I never saw the man in my life."

"Sure I know you didn't, miss. Maybe, if you did, you mightn't exactly like ——"

And Walsh, stopping short, looked very mysteriously.

"What is it you think I might not exactly like?"

"Just that maybe you'd as soon the likes of him wasn't in the boat along wid ye."

"Why, what do you suppose him to be?"

"Oh, I dunna, miss. I couldn't tell, you know, wherein I never seen the boy before."

And Walsh, satisfied that he had too far excited his young lady's curiosity to be allowed to withhold any part of the information he was dying to communicate, thought proper to assume that air of innocence which, on an Irish countenance, almost invariably succeeds the malicious inuendo.

"Come, don't keep me here all day, Walsh! but say at once what you really do mean."

Thus commanded, after a little more hesitation, Walsh deemed fit to obey.

"I'll tell you, to be sure, miss, why not; at the same time, I'd rather he tould you than mysel'; for I wouldn't like that people would cast up to me that I was making a spy of mysel'—what none afore me ever was, nor won't afther me, ayther, plaze God! Though I can't but say that the young man has a down look and a quare way about him, that I'd as soon he hadn't; and that's the blessed truth. Not but he is as fine and clevir a man as you'd see in a day's walk. And do you know, miss,

I have a great consate I seen him, some place or other, before, though I can't rightly remember where. But when I said so to him, 'Oh, no,' he made answer, 'that's impossible, for I never was in this country before,' says he; 'I'm a Munsther man.' 'A Munster man!' says I; 'that's quare, and you spaking such good Connaught Irish, God bless you!' says I. 'Oh, I didn't mane Munsther; I meant the county of Roscommon.' Then, miss, he axed as many questions as if he was a counsellor, and me on the table forenenst him, in the coort-house; but bad cess to the question he'd answer, putting one off, or purtending not to hear—as cute as you plaze. The same boy is in his hiding, as sure as you are sitting there, Bartly—nothing surer," he added, turning to the Arran man, who was listening with an air of good-natured dissatisfaction to the above observations.

"Well, so itself, Tom—he'll not be the first dacent father and mother's son, nor maybe the

last, ayther, that might get into throuble at home, an' be never the worse for it at the latter end.—We oughtn't to lane on our neighbours, Tom."

"Arrah, death alive, man! who's lanin' on him?—I never laned on any man, whatsomever he done, that thrusted me. If he gave an unlucky blow itself, at a fair or patthern, what matther?—sarra ha'porth the worse I'd think of him, for sure we are all liable to an accident that ways, the Lord be praised! But, Bartly, I can't warm to them that keeps themselves close the way that chap does, as if he thought we were all spies and informers. Why doesn't he tell out at onst, like an honest man, what brought him here, instead of sthriving to get the blind side of me?—not that I'd be very fond of giving some people the *cead mille faltha*, any way; for I've a notion, if I did, that I might have raison to remember the thrack of their foot the longest day I'd live! glory be to God!"

And, after having crossed himself with much devotion, he paused, and looked at his young mistress with a countenance full of meaning.

At any other time, Walsh's moral reflections would have been cut short by his impatient young lady; but the disturbances which at that time existed in a neighbouring county, procured him a hearing to the end.

After having remained silent a while, she desired Walsh to relate the particulars of his meeting and conversation with the suspicious stranger.

"Well, Miss, this is the way it was:—airly this morning, he came into my little cabin, and axed me would I know where Pegsheen Sullivan lived? 'Yes' says I—'she lives in Salruck, there, beyant.' 'Where could I get a boat to put me across?' says he. 'I dunna could you get e'er a one at all at the present time, anyhow, in regard of them being all out, cutting sayweed,' says I. 'Could I get one in a couple of hours?' says he. 'I dare say you

might,' says I. 'Oh, very well, I must only wait,' says he; and he was turning out of the door when I called him back, and axed him would he take a potato and sup of milk with ourselves. So he thanked me very kindly, and sat down, and him and me began discoorsing of one thing or other—he striving to pick all the information he could out of me, but not letting on anything himself; and I remarked, that whenever I'd look hard at him, to try and remember where it was I seen him before, that he'd turn away his face, and not look over-well plazed. Well, miss, he went on that ways, questioning and crass-questioning; and he axed me a great deal about Pegsheen Sullivan, just the way them would that didn't know her; though he'd say at the same time, him and her were mighty intimate. So, says I to him, 'I thought you knew her very well.' 'And so I do,' says he, 'only I didn't see her latterly, and she might be altered from what she was then.' 'And how was it you come to

know her, if you never were in this country before?' says I. 'Oh, she does be everywhere, you know,' says he—'I got acquainted below in my own place'—'Ay, in Munsther,' says I, thinking to catch him. 'No—but in Roscommon,' says he, looking round at me, with a smile on his face, as much as to say 'I'm not so easy caught.' 'There do be Roscommon gentlemen,' says I, 'coming here fishing, sometimes; maybe I might know the one you lived under.' 'I don't live under any one,' says he, and he looked dark enough the same time—and he didn't say anything for a while, nor I ayther; and afther he had been sitting that ways without speaking, I said, 'Twas a long journey to take a purpose to see Pegsheen Sullivan, if it wasn't that you were her bachelor,' says I, making a joke as though, to see what answer he'd give. So he laughed very heartily. 'Oh, I didn't come on purpose,' says he. Now, miss, he said as much as that he did, two minutes before. 'Only I thought,' says he, 'when I'd be

passing by, I might as well call in, and ax how she was.' 'So 'tis to Connamara your going?' says I. 'Yes' says he. 'And will you stop long in it?' says I. 'I don't know yet—if I get encouragement, I will,' says he. 'Encouragement to what?' says I. So he didn't make any answer for a minute, and then he said—'I've a notion of keeping a school in it,' says he. 'Keeping a school!' says I. 'By my conscience, the likes of you had better go list,' says I. 'The likes of me!' says he, and he began to laugh—'why, what do you take me for?' 'No matter,' says I—'but anyway, I wouldn't take you for a schoolmaster.' 'And, why not? many a wise head on young shoulders, you know,' said he. So then, miss, after a start, he axed me did I ever hear tell of a gentleman called Mr. Whaley. So I told him that I did, and that he was the gentleman I lived under. 'Ballymagawley is a fine place, I hear,' says he. 'You may say that,' says I—'tis the finest in this county, or the next to it ayther.' 'I

wonder,' says he, 'would I be let see it?' 'I dare say you would,' says I, 'as the masther isn't in it.' So then he began axing what sort of gentleman the masther was—and was he good to the poor—and did he set his ground reasonable, and different things that ways—and what sort of a lady you were, miss.—And I told him there wasn't your match in Europe; but that it was a great murther entirely, you wasn't a gentleman instead of a faymale; and that you'd flog the world entirely, God bless you—the very moral of Mr. Evan O'Halloran, always ready with the hand, whatever it was wanted for. So when he heard me make mention of Mr. Evan, God rest his soul in glory! he axed a power about him, and the O'Halloran, to and fro, and what became of them—and how the property came to the Whaleys—and whether the mother had no other childre but you, miss; and so I told him he was thrusting to you, now that his three fine boys were dead. So after a start again, he axed me

'did I like the masther, and was he liked in the country?' 'Why wouldn't he?—we ate the bread of his land,' says I. 'I understood you to say he wasn't,' says he. 'You understood wrong,' says I. 'Any one might make a mistake,' says he. 'To be sure,' says I. 'But I thought you told me, a while ago,' says he, 'that Mr. Whaley was a distant man, and set his lands high?' 'So itself,' says I, 'we might like him, for all that.' Now, miss, there was nothing made me think him so deep as the way he went on questioning myself, and one or two more that was in it, and then putting a bad maning on what we said, quite innocent. For, supposing itself, the masther was a bad landlord—and though I'm bred and born here, I never heard any one say he was—sure 'tisn't to every one going the road we would open our minds, to be making little of the man we lived undher; and 'twas this fashion he had, of picking up every little word we said, and twisting it into mischief, that gave me a notion he

might be one of the sort, you know, miss, because the likes of them does be always putting-up people again their landlords."

"There is something strange, certainly, in all this," said Clara. "It strikes me that my best course will be, to land the hero, as he desires, at the other side. Our friends there will be better able to take precautions against him, than, in my father's absence, we can do."

Rose was charmed at the idea of seeing a real live Ribbonman; and Walsh, after some further hesitation, was induced to "let the likes of him" into the same boat with the young mistress.

While he was endeavouring to make himself heard above the din of squalling children and yelping curs, as, in stentorian accents, he shouted to some Thady or Paddy, to "call the stranger out, and bid him come smart," Miss Whaley turned to Dirane—

"I see by your face that you don't agree in opinion with Walsh."

"I won't tell your ladyship a lie; I do not."

"And why, let me ask you?"

"Wethin, indeed, your ladyship, I find it hard to say. I never seen him till an hour or two ago; but, for all that, my heart warmed to him somehow all of a suddent. He had such a friendly way with him—got up, your ladyship, to give me his seat; 'for you're an old man,' says he, 'and looks fatigued'—and he shook me by the two hands—'for,' says he, 'I often heerd tell of you, Mr. Dirane, from a friend I had onst.' And he axed me was I well in health, and made me take a smoke; and when I praised the tobaccy, he made two halves of what he had, and gave me the biggest; and axed me a great dale about Arran—ay, troth did he—and behaved himself as plazing and agreeable as if he knew mysel' and itsel' all his life, so he did. As for having a down look, I can't say, in regard I couldn't see him well, wid the handkercher he had tied round his throat, to sthrive to mollify

the rheumatics—the crature ! He isn't come on any bad intent, your ladyship, you will see, plaze God !"

" Be alive there, can't you !" cried Walsh to a person who, elbowing his way through the crowd, advanced leisurely, occasionally stopping to adjust the muffling over his jaws, or pull the hat over his brows.

A coat of broad-cloth, though something the worse for the wear—a " Caroline" hat, still in sufficiently good preservation—and a coloured silk handkerchief, tied knowingly round his neck—betokened pretensions to a certain rustic gentility, while the tall, finely-proportioned figure fully justified Walsh's encomiums on his personal appearance.

" *Honamon dhoul !*" growled the angry boatman, "'tis you that's comical, sure enough, keeping quality this ways waiting !"

" If you were in as bad pain as me, maybe you would think little of that same, or more," the other replied, as, springing lightly into the

boat, he took his seat at a respectful distance from "the quality."

"Bartly, 'twas you gave it to him," said Walsh, sneeringly; "for he was as well as any man in Ireland, an' talkin' as glib as you plaze, till you come in it a while ago."

"So itself, no harm done," Dirane replied, without noticing Walsh's inuendo. "I have as fine a cure for the rheumatics as e'er a man in the province of Connaught ——"

And he was proceeding, in a low voice, to detail his nostrum, when Miss Whaley begged he would let her have the benefit of it, too.

"Oh, your ladyship, quality doesn't give in to the likes."

"Never mind—let us have it, at any rate. Meanwhile, Rose," Miss Whaley added, "you and I may amuse ourselves examining, unobserved, and at our leisure, the individual who has made such different impressions upon his two new acquaintances. Now, Mr. Dirane, if you please."

Mr. Dirane, after a little preparatory coughing and hemming, was at length induced to "spake out" before the ladies.

"About five-and-twenty years ago, what I am going to relate for the honourable company was tould me by an ould knowledgeable woman, that had it from an honest, dacent, well-spoken man, cousin-german to a brother-in-law of the great fairy-priest, who lived, in former times, near the say-side in Connamara, there beyant. Them that's troubled with the rheumatics and toothache—it's aqually good for both disorders—will have to get up every morning in the year—wet or dry, summer or winter—at five o'clock, and repeat the seven Penitentian Psalms five times over, the first thing they do, before they put a stitch on, or ate bit or sup, and the same going to bed at night; and three pattherin-aves on the rosary reg'lar, night and morning the same; and to keep a clove of garlic in their pocket from Aysther Sunday to Whitsun Monday; and never to pass a

comb through their heads but on Christmas Day, Michaelmas Day, Pathrick's Day, and St. John's Eve. Them that does this, will never be troubled with the tooth-ache or the rheumatics the whole year round. And that's as thrue as I'm sitting here, your ladyship; for 'twas St. Pether gave it to St. Pathrick; and everything, you know, that concerns holy and blessed men is worth having, your ladyship, if one had but knowledge and exparience to profit by it. And so I'll make bould to inform you how it came to pass that St. Pathrick was beholden to St. Pether for a cure. St. Pathrick was walking one day alone wid himsel' by the say-side, gothering fluke or deelisk—I don't rightly remember which—when there took him such a pain in his jaw as no man ever had before or sence, so that he was bawling and roaring that you'd hear him a mile off; and who should come up the same time but St. Pether, going out fishing. 'Lord save us, Pathrick!' says St. Pether—St. Pether

and St. Pathrick were second cousins, your ladyship, and, by coorse, very intimate—'The Lord save us!' says he; 'sure, man alive, if they had you in the place you know,' says he, winking at him, 'you couldn't make more noise.' 'Bedad, then,' says St. Pathrick, all the frying in Christendom can never come up to what I'm suffering;' and he gave a screech you'd think the life was laving him. 'Will somebody shoot me, or drownd me,' says he; 'for I can stand it no longer.' And, sure enough, he dropped down in a faint, wid the fair dint of pain. Well, St. Pether happened to have a small bottle of holy wather in his pocket, that was blessed at Rome by the pope, and he threw a few dhrops on St. Pathrick, and he came to himself immediately. 'Och, that murthering pain, I'm lost wid it,' says he. 'Suppose I give you a cure, what compliment will you make me,' says St. Pether. 'Oh, whatever you ax—anything at all,' says St. Pathrick. 'Anything at all sometimes comes

to be nothing at all,' says St. Pether, cute enough; 'but will you turn Christian?' says he—'that's the chat.' I forgot to mention, your ladyship, that St. Pathrick wasn't a saint at all then, nor a Catholic itself, but a haythen, or a Protestant, or something that way. 'Oh, man alive, you're too hard on me,' says he. St. Pathrick, your ladyship, didn't like to give up the fine rollicking life he led—drinking, and fighting, aud ating mate on a Friday—to make a saint of himself out of hand; because, in them days, your ladyship, there was no Christians at all then, but what got convarted into saints at onst, and no delay in life. 'Hard or no hard, you must do as I bid you,' says St. Pether, 'or it will be the worse for you.' 'If it comes to that, then, said St. Pathrick, stout enough, 'd—n the one of me will ever turn saint—so there's your answer, and much good may do you with it.' Well, your ladyship, St. Pether got mad outrageous—as well he might at St. Pathrick's

impidence—and he struck him wid a ferral he always carried in his hand, in case he might come across a wild baste, or an Orangeman, or anything that would be out of the way. 'The curse of Cromwell on you,' says he, 'and my curse, and the curse of the blessed Virgin, and the twelve apostles!' And what do you say, your ladyship, but St. Pathrick was turned into a snake; and would be so to this day, only for his mother, who performed three stations for his benefit, and the salvation of his soul and body, at Tubber Mac Duagh, in the county of Galway. St. Colman, who instituted the blessed well there, was alive then, and a great friend entirely of St. Pether's; so through his manes St. Pathrick got the curse took off him; but from that day out, St. Pathrick had a great consate agin snakes, and toads, and the like, and could never bear they'd be in the same place wid himself. So when he come to Ireland, to return thanks to St. Colman, he banished them out of the country,

and bequeathed, in his will, the cure he got from St. Pether, after they were made friends, to St. Colman, as a compliment for his handsome behaviour to himself; and so there's the whole ins and outs of the cure, and them that gave it, your ladyship."

"Success to you, Bartly," cried Walsh, smiling complacently; "'Tis as fine a cure, and as pleasant a story as I heard tell this many a day; and mighty instructive into the bargain."

"Well, Miss Whaley," said Rose, in an under voice, "concerning the stranger, what say you?"

"Why, it would be unfair, perhaps, to decide upon the character of one whom we can neither hear nor see; for, as you may have observed, he has not articulated a syllable since he entered the boat, and it is impossible even to catch a glimpse of his features, muffled up as they are. But, I am inclined to think, such a strict silence and careful concealment is itself suspicious."

"Perhaps he really is in pain, as he says, poor creature!" rejoined Rose.

"Humph, I doubt it. None of that restless uneasiness of posture, indicative of bodily suffering, is observable in him. There he sits, motionless; his hat pulled down over his brows; his dark, glittering eyes, the only part of his face he cannot contrive to conceal, wandering about in all directions—sometimes fixed on the surrounding scenery, sometimes, in turn, on each of our countenances, with an expression that strikes me as sinister and scowling. I observed, too, that he did not attend to one word the Arran man said, although especially intended for his service."

"But it was such absurd nonsense."

"Ay, absurd nonsense to us, but not to a person of his class. How charmed Walsh was with it! I must try, however, and get him into talk;" and, accordingly addressing the object of her suspicions, Clara asked him, "how he liked Mr. Dirane's cure."

"Do you hear Miss Whaley spaking to you?" cried Walsh, laying his hand, at the same time, not very gently, on his neighbour's shoulder.

The young man started, and muttered an apology, of which the words were indistinct, but in the accompanying gesture there was much grace—an accidental grace, however, as it appeared, for the next moment the attitude was as uncouth as the diction and accent in which he assured the lady, "that he was too bad wid pain, to be mindin' anything."

"You are going to your friend, Pegsheen, for a charm, I suppose," said Miss Whaley.

He hesitated for a moment.

"Oh, yes, ma'am; that's what is taking me in it —— What are you laughing at?" he added, abruptly, turning to Walsh.

"Oh, nothing," the other replied; "only a thought that came into my head, what quare people there does be in the world, that take a long journey to see a certain person, and

couldn't tell what would bring 'em, till they'd get a fit of the rheumatics, all of a suddent, just at the door, one may say."

To the insinuation conveyed in this speech, the stranger made no rejoinder, much to the dissatisfaction of his antagonist, who was particularly desirous of displaying, in his young mistress's presence, his talents at cross-examination.

Having failed in his attempt at interrogating the stranger, for his lady's edification, he now proceeded to interrogate his lady for his own ; but here, he was aware, he had need of much discretion. Mr. Walsh was, however, as discreet as he was inquisitive—two qualities, by the way, not generally allied.

The motive of his curiosity will sufficiently appear in the course of his interrogatory, ejaculatory observations.

"Well, your honour, we have a fine day for the Pass, the Lord be praised! 'Tis a great curiosity, entirely, wid the quality ; and no

blame to them—there's an iligant prospect from it. But do you know what, miss, mysel' thinks there's a greater curiosty than the Pass itself, living convanient to it, and that's Pegsheen Sullivan—Pegsheen na Shiogh. Did you ever hear 'tis there she keeps —— Och, to be sure you did! You wouldn't be wanting to spake to her—would you, miss?"

"Why, what do you suppose I could want with her?" replied his young mistress, evasively, for she did not, by any means, desire, in this stage of the business, to let it be known that she had any object in seeing Pegsheen; and, therefore, in giving orders for the boat to be in readiness, had charged Considine to say nothing more than that the ladies were going to visit the Pass.

But Mr. Considine was a blab—as very a blab as could be found among that womankind for whom, on this particular point—to wit, their inability to "keep their tongues quiet"—Mr. Considine professed, and, indeed, enter-

tained as well as professed, a more than ordinary share of masculine contempt. To be trusted, and yet not to intimate, by word or look, that he *was* trusted—to be possessed of a secret, and yet to keep his being possessed of it a secret, was, in Mr. Considine's opinion, "a thing out of all char*ac*ter and calculation." And accordingly, having summoned Tom Walsh to his presence—through the instrumentality of one of the innumerable subs that, even in the best regulated Irish country establishments, are constantly lounging about, ready to obey the behests of the magnates of the household—he communicated, in so mysterious a manner, that he would be wanted in the morning, to convey the ladies to Salruck, as might almost have led him to suppose it was expected from him *not* to bring them back. He could not, however, elicit from Mr. Considine the whole of the secret. It was sufficient for him to know that Mr. Considine knew it; and he had reason to be thankful that so great a

man should condescend so far as to inform him that there was any secret at all. In due time, when Pegsheen should have been captured—orders for which would most probably be given on the spot, by Miss Whaley—through the exertions of, and at the risk of consequences to, Tom himself, and brought before Mr. Considine for examination, touching a certain weighty matter, which would astonish everybody, the mystery would then be divulged. Meanwhile, Tom Walsh, under pain of Mr. Considine's displeasure, was forbidden to "brathe to man, woman, or child," what Mr. Considine had so graciously imparted to him.

This being the state of things, it may be supposed that Tom felt somewhat "put out" by his young mistress's answer. He was not altogether prompted by idle curiosity. He was also actuated by a prudential regard to his own safety, in his wish to ascertain precisely the motive for the service required of

him ; he being particularly anxious to avoid, as much as possible, coming into collision with Pegsheen na Shiogh.

"You wouldn't be wantin' to show her to the young lady that's along wid you, miss ?" resumed Walsh, after some moments' deliberation.

"If we find her there, well and good," rejoined Miss Whaley.

"I don't think we will, miss."

Tom said this because he had reason to believe that she was just then at home.

"Well, no matter ; we shall find the Pass, at any rate," replied the lady, in a tone of indifference.

"You won't be caring to see Pegsheen at all, then, miss, I'm thinking ; bekase if you were, and had anything to say to her, maybe she might be shy of spaking to quality ; so if I known what it was, in case you had anything to say—but sure you haven't—I could make her sinsible of it, and bring back her

answer; or, for that matter, coax herself back wid us. Betther go aisy wid the likes of her, if we can."

"I wish you would talk less, Walsh," said Miss Whaley; "for, at this rate, it will be dark night before we can be home again."

While pronouncing these words, Clara chanced to look towards the stranger, and caught his eyes so steadfastly fixed upon her, that she coloured, as if detected in an artifice of a deeper dye than the one by which she endeavoured to parry Walsh's attacks.

"Bad luck to that Considine!" muttered the boatman, as, in obedience to his young lady's commands, he plied his oar with renewed vigour; "I wish he tould me all, or nothing."

Rose, however, unwilling to let the subject drop, finding Miss Whaley disposed to remain silent, addressed Walsh thus:—

"Who is this Pegsheen that you talk so much about? I wish you would tell me all

you know, or may have heard, concerning her ?"

"Is it tell you all I ever heard of Pegsheen Sullivan, miss ? Troth, it would take a woman, let alone a man, from this till to-morrow, to do that—and not have the one half rehearsed properly then itself. But sure I'll do my endayvours ; and anything I don't tell right, Bartly will explain, for he has greater exparience than me, in matthers of the sort."

"Avoch, good rayson I have !" exclaimed the person referred to, and his voice, even more than his words, was expressive of the deepest dejection.

Walsh did not notice the interruption, further than by a look of sympathy, and proceeded thus :—

"Pegsheen Sullivan, miss, is a great curiosty entirely, and flogs the world in knowledge of herribs and charums, for all kinds of disases and misfortunes. An' more nor that, she can tell you what will befall you, and when

you're for death, and when you ar'n't. There was a cousin of mine—a fine young man as you'd see anywhere—and he was lying in the small pox, mighty bad. The docthor left him for dead, and the priest itself had no hope of him, so the mother—God help her! that was thrusting to him—came an' axed Pegsheen for an herrib; but she tould her it was no use, and to go home and buy whiskey and candles for the wake, 'for he's a doomed man,' says she, 'and will never eat a bit of this world's mate.' An' what do you say, miss, but her words come thrue. Mysel' often wonders how them of her sort gets to know who's for death, and who isn't. Bartly, did you ever hear tell?"

"I did, often; and this is the way: By dint of the gift they have, they find out the herrib in the field that the life of the Christhin is depending on; and they mark it at sunset, and again at sunrise, and afterwards a second time at sunset; and if the lafe of the herrib

is turned down or withered, the person will go, but if it isn't turned down or withered, he'll recover for certain."

"Well, well, glory be to God! isn't that wonderful? Ah, then, Bartly, how do you think do they come by the gift, for those has it, you know, that are like ourselves, not all as one as Pegsheen?"

"It's by manes of the four-lafed shamrock they come by it, Tom. Did you ever hear tell of the four-lafed shamrock, miss?" the old man added, turning to Rose, who was, as he observed, attentively listening to him. "You did not? Well, miss, then I'll explain it to you, wid the help of God. The four-lafed is a thing you might search the world over for, and not find afther all; but if you did find it, you would come to understand what cattle, and dogs, and birds would be saying; and the likes of them are knowledgeable beyant Christhins in many ways, and so one might pick up many a thing, if one understood the lan-

guage they talked in. Likewise, thim that finds it comes to see things as they are in reality."

"A valuable gift, indeed," observed Rose, smiling.

"Did you ever know one who had it, Bartly ?" asked Walsh ?

"I heerd of a man onst who had it," replied Dirane ; "but it departed from him, because he tould another what he used to be seeing and hearing; and that's contrary to the rule, they say. The way the power come to him was by accident, as I heerd tell. Himself, and a neighbour of his, slaughtered a baste agen Easther ; and he was bringing home his share in a basket, and the load was heavy, so he sat down awhile to rest himself ; and it happened that he stooped down to pick a bit of grass, and what should it turn out to be but a four-lafed shamrock ! So he wondered greatly at this, as well he might ; for though he often heerd tell of it, he never seen one be-

fore ; and signs by it, in place of the beef he was carrying home, as he thought, what should he see but a dead man's arm sticking out of the basket, that the good people put in it instead of the mate."

"The Lord be praised !" cried Walsh; "and you heerd that for certain, Bartley ?"

But before Bartley had time to branch out into another digression, or bring forward another case in point, he was interrupted by Miss Dillon.

"All this is very wonderful, no doubt ; but I want to hear something more about Pegsheen herself—particularly I wish to know what you think of her disposition, and whether you would consider her spiteful and mischievous ?"

The old man shook his head, and smiled mournfully. "Tom, what would *you* say of her ?"

"Troth, and I dunna what to say, Bartly. I couldn't say she was well-natured, certainly, and I couldn't say she wasn't, ayther. She

doesn't be like another, you know, in anything. Many's the poor man, miss, would have had his little earnings sazed by the potheen peelers only for her; and many a horse and cow would have been clifted, or dhrowned in bog-holes, only for her; but the minute afther, she'd bid you go to the dickens, maybe, for axing her how she come to know they were in danger. Sometimes she'll take the butther off the churn, and more times she'll bring it back again, when others of her sort set it asthray—just accordin' to the humour she'd be in. They say, miss, 'tis an herrib the cow treads on at midnight, that gives the power of setting the butther asthray. And I know a young gerril that seen Pegsheen, a moonlight night, convanient to the house, sarching as though for something; and the next morning hersel' and her mother had a churning, an' sorrow as much butter as would blind your eye they had for their pains, till an ould woman come in, and tould them the butther was bewitched; so she put a coal of fire

under the churn, and lent them the loan of a gad of mountain-ash, made on May-day, to put around the churn, an' then, sure enough, the butther come. But the ould woman didn't sarve herself, they say, for crassing Pegsheen. The crature was sittin' late one night, afther coming home from a christening, takin' a smoke, fair and aisy, by hersel' ; and what do you say, miss, but in the morning when she got up, she found all her flax she had drying by the fire, burned on her ? Oh, sarra word of lie in that, miss, Mysel' always kep' clear of Pegsheen Sullivan, an', signs by it, it thruv wid me. The time I was taken wid the fear-gurtha, miss, going along Mameam, alone by myself, I never would have ate a bit again, only for her. I dunna how long I was lying in it when she come up, nor how long I might be lying in it ayther, unknownst—for 'tis a mighty lonesome place ; but anyhow she didn't lave me in it. She had me carried home, when it failed her to bring me to, wid

the sperrits. But, like that, she tuk the worth of the good-nature out in another way. 'Tis well but she killed my wife on me—an' she in bed the same time—and little Dinny, that Miss Whaley stood for—long life to her!—not four days old, lying beside her. What does Pegsheen do, but comes runnin' into the cabin, clappin' her hands—a fashion she has whenever she has news to tell, and whether good or bad is all one to her—'Tom will come to ye, Winny,' says she, 'but not on his own legs this turn;' and away wid her then, runnin' for the bare life, schreechin,' laughin', through the village; an' my wife in a faint all along of the fright she got. But I darn't say a word, for fear would them she daled wid stale the child, or the mother, or, maybe, both of 'em, on me. Do you know what, miss, I never seen Pegsheen Sullivan look sorrowful like another but onst in her life, an' that was when Mr. Evan died—the heavens be his bed; but though she was only a child at the time,

she cried as sinsible as if she was twenty years of age—ay, troth, did she; and would still, the crature, if she heerd any one make mention of him. But, like that, sure she danced at his wake; and that the sorrowfullest wake this country ever seen, anyhow. I was but a small slip of a boy the same time; but I remember all about it as well as e'er a man in the barony. Bartly, 'twas he knew how to handle the oar an' the sheets—he didn't lave his aqual afther him; the raal gentleman all out, an' had such a grand look wid him; an' so pleasant—always jokin' and laughin', exceptin' when he'd be in a passion, or the like of that. Not a man on the estate he didn't know, an' the name of his townland, ay, faith, as well as themselves every bit. Anyhow, such a lamentation never was in this counthry afore or sence, as there was for him—not a dhry eye to be seen; for them that never shed a tear before—dark, distant men—cried bitther the day he departed. I remember the night he was waked,

as if 'twas but yesterday—the elegant corpse he made; an' his nurse sittin' at the head of the bed, cryin' over him; an' the ould masther, God help him! as white as a sheet, but not able to cry a tear, good or bad. What killed him entirely was, to think how himsel' and Mr. Evan used to have fallings out. He was close wid the money, an' Mr. Evan, he thought, was too free wid it—so the ould people say; I dunna was it thrue or no; but there he was, sure enough, the heart-broken father, his fine son—the only one he had—stretched before him; them that couldn't get room within, sittin' lamentin' outside; an' the hills echoing the cry of them that were flocking in to take their last look of him, over the mountains, and acrass the bog, by hundreds and thousands. 'Cushla macree!' the ould nurse would say, 'is it this ways I see you laid low—you, the flower of the counthry an' pride of the nation! I suckled you, an' 'twas appointed me to stretch you. But, oh! why did

you lave us without one of your ancient name to comfort us? Why didn't you leave us a son, to stand in your place?' When she said them words, miss, such other screechin', an' clapping of the hands, and striking on the breast, as there was. In the middle of it, what do you say to Pegsheen Sullivan that gets up an' dances on the flure for the bare life, as though in rejoicement there would be no heir to the O'Hallorans of Ballymagawley. She's a quare gerril entirely, miss—sorra quarer."

"Have you told me now all you know about her?" Miss Dillon inquired.

"Troth, I have, Miss, every ha'porth, unless Bartly Dirane would like I'd make mention of the dealings him an' her used to be having together. Is it long since you seen her, Bartly?" he added, lowering his voice.

"Faith it is—five years goin' on."

"An' by coorse, you hav'nt heerd anything of *him* since?"

Dirane sighed heavily.

"No, sarra word; but my heart does be broke dhramin' of him lattherly—the quarest dhrames ever you seen, Tom. I'm in great hopes Pegsheen will knock some maning out of them for me."

"An' is that what's takin' ye in it?"

"Ay, troth—nothing else."

"Your mind is greatly on him still, Bartly."

"An' will be to the hour of my death. I'll never be the same man again, Tom."

"Was this a son you lost?" Rose asked, interested by the tone of heartfelt sorrow in which the old man spoke.

"It was, your ladyship; an' the only son I had, or daughter ayther. I was thrustin' to him!"

"And his illness, I suppose, brought you and Pegsheen Sullivan first acquainted?"

"He never was a day sick or sore, as the saying is; as healthy a boy, and as fine—though I say it, that shouldn't say it—as you'd

wish to see. But what was the good of that? They had other ways and manes to get at him besides sickness."

"Did he die suddenly, then?"

"He never died at all, your ladyship."

"Never died at all!" Rose repeated. "This seems a strange story, indeed."

"Sorrow word of lie in that, miss," cried Walsh; "'tis a strange story entirely. Arrah, Bartly, tell her all about it."

"Don't ax me, Tom, an' God bless you. 'Tis aqual to the prod of a knife to me, whenever any one draws down the subject of Brian. I wouldn't refuse, only for that, anything that would pleasure the company."

But Walsh, whose sensibilities did not happen to be particularly acute, continued to urge him.

"Let him alone, can't you," said the stranger, for the first time breaking silence. "Don't you see you're tazing him?"

"I ought to go to school to you to larn manners, I suppose," retorted Walsh.

The other made no rejoinder, but assumed his former attitude of quiet observation.

This circumstance, trifling as it was, did not escape Clara's notice, who, while the others were talking, had been attentively engaged watching him. She had already frequently remarked him looking at Dirane with an expression very different from the keen survey he bestowed on the other members of the party, particularly upon herself; the stern, anxious, scrutinizing glances, softened into a tenderness almost womanly, when bent on the calm, melancholy face of the old islander. Yet, strange to say, whenever their eyes chanced to meet, his were immediately, and in some confusion, withdrawn; and if subjected in his turn to examination, she observed that he received it with the same air of sullen indifference as that with which he encountered the inquiring looks of any other individual in company. What could be his object in thus endeavouring to conceal an interest which was

rather creditable than otherwise to him, Clara was at a loss to conjecture; and her curiosity to penetrate his real character became not a little increased by this involuntary manifestation of kindly feeling.

Rose turned the conversation once more upon Pegsheen.

"Has she as clear a recollection, do you think, of circumstances that may have happened some years ago, as other people have?"

"Troth she has, miss, every bit," replied Walsh, to whom the question was addressed, "when she likes."

"When she likes! Don't you suppose that if upon oath, the truth might be extracted from her?"

"Oh, bedad, miss, them would be hard set that would go put the likes of her on the table."

"They might go farther, and fare worse, Tom," observed Dirane. "She would make as fine a witness as e'er a one in the barony—no

getting a haporth out of her that would disarve them she'd have a wish for."

"In that case, if there was any circumstance she might have an interest in concealing, she is clever enough to do so," observed Rose.

"Prenez garde de ce que vous dites lâ ma chere," interrupted Clara, whose attention to the foregoing short dialogue had been excited by the eager curiosity, not unmingled with surprise and perplexity, manifested by the stranger.

On finding himself observed, he coloured with vexation, and withdrew his gaze from Rose's countenance, upon which it had been rivetted.

"I should very much like to know what induced you to come to this country?" said Miss Whaley, suddenly, to the mysterious individual—"to this country, where there are already more schoolmasters than can get employment."

"Bad luck to your sowl an' body!" ex-

claimed Walsh, perceiving the young man continued silent; "don't you hear Miss Whaley axing you what put it into your head to come here."

"I do."

"You do! Gurrumuh! uot with it then."

"Not at your bidding, or that of any person like you," the other replied, with a composure that in a gentleman would have been called dignified.

"A person like me, is it? Take care would I turn schoolmasther to you, and tache you something you never larned yet, and that is manners. By all that's good!" he added, with a menacing gesture, "only you are where you are, and that I might upset the boat on the ladies, but I'd throw you into the middle of the say, so I would."

The young man laughed contemptuously; and Clara, apprehensive that, if Walsh became further irritated, a scuffle might ensue, now interposed, to prevent unpleasant consequences.

"I am sorry you have taken offence—there was none, I assure you, intended; but you ought to be aware that concealment on your part must naturally create suspicion on ours."

"'Tis a hard case," he replied, in a tone of suppressed passion, "that a man can't travel quietly through the country, without being questioned and cross-questioned in this manner every step of the road."

"If you have such an objection to being questioned, I would recommend you to leave this neighbourhood; for the magistrates will, most probably, take the liberty of inquiring, as I have done, into your business here; and will exercise the power which they possess, and which I do not, of compelling a reply."

"Compelling a reply! The king's highway is open to every man, I should suppose."

"Yes—to every honest man."

"And who takes upon themselves to say I am anything else?"

Miss Whaley's rejoinder was interrupted by the bustle attendant upon landing.

The boat was run into a little creek, through the deep clear waters of which might be seen the tiny pebbles, purple and green, which lay scattered in gay confusion at the bottom, while the air was perfumed by the sea-pinks which fringed the margin of the mimic bay—a spot, worthy, as Rose observed, of being selected by the mermaid as her favourite haunt."

The stranger, who had just jumped ashore, tendered his services to assist the ladies, with an air of graceful courtesy superior to his station.

Miss Whaley having motioned him to follow her, led him some little distance from the rest of the party.

"Take my advice," she said, earnestly; "return whence you came. Your errand is known; for with all your caution you have committed yourself."

The young schoolmaster uttered an exclama-

tion of surprise, but did not otherwise interrupt Miss Whaley, and she proceeded—

"Aware of your object in coming here, of course timely measures will be taken to defeat it—these you must anticipate."

Some moments elapsed before the stranger replied to the foregoing observation; and when he did speak, his low, agitated, yet distinct tones, betrayed that he was still contending against powerful emotion. The voice, however, was no longer coarse, nor the manner rustic. He drew himself up to his full height, and folding his arms with an air of careless defiance, and returning her look of surprise by one in which mingled triumph and indignation were expressed—

"I have to thank you, madam," said he, "for having, though unintentionally, rendered me an important service. Certain doubts previously entertained by me are now set at rest. I am not, however, ignorant of the difficulties that surround me. The warfare between us I

know to be unequal: evidence may be suborned, or, if found more convenient, may be extinguished altogether. My life may be attempted. Beware, nevertheless, how you drive me desperate. Persecution shall be met by vengeance—ay, by vengeance," he added, fiercely, "deep and heavy as my wrongs. I would not willingly alarm a lady," he continued, in a calmer tone, observing Miss Whaley shudder at his vehemence—"I'm no bullying bravo, to play upon the fears of women. I am unfortunate and excitable—because I'm unfortunate—I may not therefore always be master of my words, nor even of my actions."

He paused a moment, and then proceeded—

"Observe, however, that I come in the spirit of peace. Meet me in the same spirit. Employ your influence with your father: if treated with fairness, I shall be found forbearing—if with harshness, on his own head be the consequences!"

He turned abruptly away, and hastening

down the declivity which led to the shore, was lost to Clara's sight before she had recovered from her astonishment.

Being joined soon after by Rose, and followed at a distance by the Arran man, she moved towards the celebrated Pass.

END OF VOL. I.

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